

A Record of a Mortal's Journey to Immortality (凡人修仙传)

Volume 01

Seven Mysteries Sect

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Story Description:

A poor and ordinary boy from a village joins a minor sect in Jiang Hu and becomes an Unofficial Disciple by chance. How will Han Li, a commoner by birth, establish a foothold for himself in his sect? With his mediocre aptitude, how will he successfully traverse the path of cultivation and become an immortal? This is a story of an ordinary mortal who, against all odds, clashes with devilish demons and ancient celestials in order to find his own path towards immortality.

Rated 5/5 by translators and ranked 2nd out of the millions of novels on Qidian, “A Record of a Mortal's Journey to Immortality” will draw readers in with an epic tale of honour, betrayal, and love.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

Chapter 1: The Village by the Forest

“Second Fool” opened his eyes and stared at the mud and thatch roof over his head. The quilt covering his body was a deep yellow color and had a musty smell, but it was so old that its original color couldn’t be distinguished anymore.

Next to him lay his second brother, Han Zhu, who appeared to be in a deep slumber. Sounds of snoring intermittently floated over as he slept.

Five feet away from the bed was an earthen wall that had suffered from numerous cracks due to passage of time. From the other side of the wall came the nagging voice of his mother and occasionally the deep breathing of his father, who was smoking his pipe.

Second Fool slowly closed his eye, trying to force himself to sleep. He knew that if he didn’t go to sleep now, he wouldn’t be able to wake up early the following day, and if woke up late, he wouldn’t be able to go up to the mountains with his good friends to gather firewood.

Second Fool’s real name was Han Li. This elegant name was not given to him by his parents. When he was born, his parents had offered two pieces of cornbread to the village’s Elder Zhang in return for giving the baby Han Li a second name.

(TL: “Second Fool” in Mandarin has a pleasing sound despite of its meaning)

When Uncle Zhang was young, he had attended school with the wealthy children from the city. He was the only one in the village to know how to read a few words, so more than half of the children in the village were named by him.

Han Li was called “Second Fool” by those in the village. Despite of his name, he wasn’t stupid looking or foolish; on the contrary, he was actually the smartest person in the village. But just like the other children, aside from when they were home, nobody called him by his official name “Han Li”. Instead, they called him by his pet name “Second Fool”

The reason why he was nicknamed “Second Fool” was due to the fact that there was already someone named “Fool” in the village.

But this type of nickname was nothing. There were children in the village named “Doggy” and “Dumb Egg”. These names weren’t nearly as pleasant-sounding as “Second Fool”.

Because of this, Han Li had some consolation even though he was not very fond of his nickname.

Physically, Han Li was very ordinary. He was tan and matched the generic descriptions of a child born in a farming community. Deep in his heart, however, he had matured faster than others of the same age. Ever since he was young, he had yearned that one day, he would be able to walk away from his small village and explore the fertile lands of the outside world that Uncle Zhang had always talked about.

Han Li had never dared to speak of his dreams to anyone else in the village because they would be deeply shocked. After all, leaving this place was a notion that even adults didn’t easily think about, let alone a small child. Children around his age only knew how to chase chickens and pet dogs. They had never entertained the strange notion of leaving the village.

Han Li’s family had a total of seven members., including two older brothers, one older sister, and one younger sister. He was the fourth eldest in his family and had turned ten this year. Together, they lived a hard yet honest lifestyle. Very rarely did they get to eat meat and fish, but the entire family was content with living with what meager resources they had.

At this moment, Han Li was hovering between a state of sleep and consciousness. As he slowly drifted to sleep, only one thought was on his mind: While in the mountains, he had to pick more red berries for his younger sister whom he doted the most!

The next morning, at noon, Han Li was shielding himself from the scorching sun overhead with the shade cast by a pile of lumber on his back. Wrapped around his chest was a pouch filled to the brim with red berries that bounced with each step as he walked home. He had no idea

that at this moment, there was a guest in his home, a guest that that would change his destiny forever.

This guest was actually someone who had very close blood ties with Han Li; it was his Third Uncle!

Rumors said he was the shopkeeper of a restaurant in the nearby city. According to his parents, Third Uncle was the most capable within their family. The Han family had, after a few hundred years, finally produced someone like his Third Uncle, a figure with status and respect that was unrivaled within the family.

When Han Li was young, he had only met his Third Uncle a few times. Han Li's older brother was a blacksmith's apprentice in the city thanks to Third Uncle's introduction. Every so often, this Third Uncle would even bring some food for his father and mother to bring home to eat. Because he had looked after Han Li's family with great consideration, Han Li had a very good impression of him. Even though his parents never said anything, he knew that in their hearts, they were very grateful.

Han Li's eldest brother was the family's pride and joy. As an apprentice to a blacksmith, minus the living expenses, every month he would be able to bring home 30 copper coins. And when he finally graduated from his apprenticeship, he would earn even more money!

Every time his father and mother talked about their eldest son, their spirits would soar with pride. Although Han Li was young, he was tremendously envious. The best work he could find was to be the apprentice of a craft master and rely on the crafts he made to earn money.

So when Han Li saw the brand new satin robes and the round face that belonged to his Third Uncle, Han Li was overjoyed.

Setting down the firewood in a corner outside of the house, he went to the front of the house to greet his Third Uncle. "Third Uncle, Han Li greets you." After doing so, he obediently stood to the side and listened to his Third Uncle chat with his parents.

Third Uncle beamed at Han Li as he opened his mouth, praising his

nephew. “What a sensible child!” After complimenting Han Li, he turned his attention back to Han Li’s parents and explained the reason for his visit.

Because Han Li was young, he wasn’t able to fully understand the words his Third Uncle was saying, but he could roughly understand the meaning of it

It turned out his Third Uncle’s restaurant had the backing of the Seven Mysteries Sect. This sect was divided into the inner and outer divisions, and not too long ago, Third Uncle had been officially recognized as an outer disciple. That meant that he could bring a child from the age of 7 to 12 to take the Inner Disciple Examinations.

Once every 5 years, the Seven Mysteries Sect would formally issue invitations for youngsters to take the test for becoming inner disciples. The test would officially begin the following month. Third Uncle was a smart and astute man who was childless, so naturally he thought of Han Li, who met the age requirement.

The moment the usually docile Father Han heard the words “Jiang Hu” and “Sect”, along with many other phrases he had never heard before, he felt very hesitant. Bringing his smoking pipe to his lips and giving it a puff, he sat down without saying a word.

(TL: “Father Han” is the title of Han Li’s father)

According to Third Uncle, the Seven Mysteries Sect could be considered one of the best sects within several hundred miles.

If one were to become an inner disciple, not only could he or she cultivate martial arts as well as eat and sleep for free, one would also receive a monthly allowance. Not only that, but for those who participated in the Inner Disciple Examinations but do not pass, they could still enter the outer division and become a outer disciple like Third Uncle. They would still be able to have the opportunity to help the Seven Mysteries Sect handle its external affairs.

Upon hearing the possibility that his son could receive a monthly allowance, and could even become as successful as his Third Uncle, Han

Li's father finally decided to give his approval.

After getting the approval from Han Li's father, Third Uncle felt elation in his heart. Leaving behind two silver coins, he said that in a month, he would return and escort Han Li to the testing area. During this period of time, Han Li's father had to ensure that Han Li was clothed and well fed to improve his constitution so that it would be easier for Han Li to pass the test. After giving instructions, Third Uncle bid farewell to Han Li and his father, patted Han Li on his head, and left for the city.

While Han Li didn't fully comprehend his Third Uncle's words, he could understand that he would be able to earn money in the big city. It seemed that his dream from before was going to come true, making him so excited that he couldn't fall asleep for the first few nights.

After one month had passed, Third Uncle returned to the village, escorting Han Li to the testing site. Before he left, Han Li's father repeatedly instructed Han Li on ways of proper behaviour. One must be honest, have the capacity to endure, and avoid unnecessary conflicts with others. Meanwhile, Han Li's mother urged him to take care of his health and to eat and sleep well.

The day finally arrived when Third Uncle came to take Han Li away by carriage. As his parents gradually disappeared from his sight, Han Li bit down on his lips in order to prevent his tears from flowing down his eyes.

Although he had always been more mature than other children of the same age, he was still a ten year old child. This was the first time he had left home, so he naturally felt depressed. A homesickness developed in his heart. He was determined to rush home after he struck riches, never to be separated from his parents.

What Han Li didn't know was that, from this moment on, money has lost its meaning to him. He had already chosen to embark on a path different from ordinary mortals. He had chosen to enter the world of cultivation, walking his own path towards immortality!

Chapter 2: Green Ox Town

Han Li's home was said to be a small city, but it was actually no more than a large town called Green Ox Town. Only those who lived in the mountain region and the natives with no knowledge of the outside world called the town Qiu Niu City. The only reason why Han Li knew about this was because he had been informed by his Uncle Zhang, who had been working as a gatekeeper for more than ten years.

Qiu Niu City wasn't a very large town, so there was only one main road, known as Qiu Niu Street, that spanned from the east and west borders of the town. There was only one tavern in the town, located in the westernmost part of town. For any traveling merchant that didn't want to sleep outdoors, this tavern was the only solution.

There was only one road for carriages in the western part of Green Ox Town. It ran from the gates of the town and the Green Ox Tavern all the way to the Spring Fragrance Restaurant, the only other place where anyone would visit besides the tavern.

Spring Fragrance Restaurant wasn't big by any means and was actually quite old-fashioned. However, this establishment had a certain charm that was appealing to many travelers. Every day at noon, there would always be a crowd of people, making the place constantly swamped.

A bearded man with a round face emerged from a carriage along with a dark skinned, rotund little boy who looked to be around ten years old. They both walked into the restaurant swaggeringly. All of the regular customers knew who this man was: he was the shopkeeper of this restaurant, "Fatty Han." The boy, however, was not someone they were familiar with.

"Elder Han, this tanned little boy resembles you a lot. Could it be a child from a prostitute you spent the night with?" someone joked.

The moment the joke was uttered, the entire restaurant roared with laughter.

"Peh! This is the son of my blood brother, my very own nephew! Of

course he'll look like me," Fatty Han said proudly instead of being angered.

This duo traveled for three whole days with no rest before arriving at the town. They were Han Li and his Third Uncle, who was known as "Fatty Han" by the townspeople.

Fatty Han greeted a few regulars, brought Han Li to the back of the restaurant, and entered a remote courtyard.

"Xiao Li, you should rest here for a while. When the time comes for the Inner Disciple Examinations, I'll call you. For now, I must leave in order to attend to a few regulars." Fatty Han pointed at a side room in the courtyard and kindly motioned for Han Li to enter it.

(TL: "Xiao" in this context means "little")

With that said, Han Li's Third Uncle turned around and hurried back inside the restaurant to tend to his customers.

As he reached the door, he felt a sudden unease in his heart and reminded Han Li, "Don't run about. You might get lost in the town if you wander around, so it's best if you don't leave this courtyard."

"En!"

After hearing Han Li's honest response, he nodded in relief and walked out the door,

After his Third Uncle left the courtyard, Han Li suddenly felt exhausted. The moment his head landed on his pillow, he fell into a deep sleep and began snoring, surprisingly without the fear of a normal kid staying alone in unfamiliar surroundings.

When the night came, a servant came by with some food, and although it wasn't a lavish meal, it was still delicious. After Han Li ate the food, the servant cleared away the remaining dishes when his Third Uncle leisurely walked in.

"How was it? Was the meal suitable to your taste? Do you miss home?"

"Yes, I miss home..." Han Li replied in his childish voice.

Third Uncle seemed satisfied with Han Li's response and began to talk to him about his daily life and then bragged many of his experiences. Gradually, Han Li began to lose his shyness and started to laugh and talk with his Third Uncle.

In this manner, two days quickly passed.

On the third day, after Han Li finished dinner, he was waiting for his uncle's stories of Jiang Hu when a carriage stopped in front of the restaurant door.

(TL: Jiang Hu – World of Martial Artists/Cultivators)

This carriage was painted a shiny black color and even the horse was a rarely seen golden steed. But what attracted the most attention was that on the frame of the carriage was the word "Mystery" written in silver words in the middle of a red triangle emblazing a black banner. The image on the banner also emitted a unfathomable air.

Seeing this banner, each and every martial arts expert within the area knew that this carriage belonged to one of the two local overlords in the area, the Seven Mysteries Sect. It seemed that an esteemed guest had arrived in Green Ox Town.

The Seven Mysteries Sect had been previously known as the Seven Supreme Sect. Two hundred years ago, the sect was established by an extremely famous martial master named "Sovereign of the Seven Supreme". Having once swept across and dominated the Jing Province and the nearby Shu Province for a few decades, the Sovereign of the Seven Supreme was resoundingly famous. But after he was afflicted with illness, the power of the Seven Mysteries Sect took a devastating hit and its influence dropped drastically. In the end, the Seven Mysteries Sect was forced out of the main city of the Jing Province by the combined efforts of its rival sects. A hundred years ago, the sect was forced to relocate to an extremely remote area called the Celestial Rainbow Mountain, and from then on, they built up their roots in that third rate region and became a local powerhouse.

Locally, the only other power that could rival the Seven Mysteries Sect

was the Feral Wolf Gang.

The Feral Wolf Gang was originally a gang of horse-mounted bandits from the Jing Province that had no qualms about burning, killing, looting and pillaging. After a while, an army dispatched by the imperial court encircled and fiercely suppressed the bandits. Some of the bandits accepted the amnesty granted to them by the imperial court while the remaining bandits reformed themselves into the Feral Wolf Gang. The Feral Wolf Gang was exceedingly cruel and bloodthirsty, retaining their former characteristics from back when they had no qualms about committing atrocities. Thus, whenever they clashed, the Seven Mysteries Sect were always at a disadvantage.

Even though the Feral Wolf Gang controlled more towns than the Seven Mysteries Sect, the gang didn't know how to manage the towns to effectively run a business and generate income, so in comparison, the wealth of the towns controlled by the Seven Mysteries Sect vastly outstripped the towns under Feral Wolf Gang's control. Jealous of the Seven Mysteries Sect's prosperity, the Feral Wolf Gang made plans to take over the Sect's territory, resulting in the longstanding conflict between the two major powers. The conflict gave the current Sect Leader of the Seven Mysteries Sect endless headaches. Because of the Feral Wolf Gang, the Seven Mysteries Sect had been increasing the number of disciples in recent years.

After the carriage stopped, a skinny forty year old man jumped down. His movements were extremely nimble, indicating he was a powerful expert. He seemed to be very familiar with Fatty Han's restaurant and walked pompously straight towards the room Han Li was residing in.

Upon seeing the forty year old man, Fatty Han immediately greeted him respectfully.

"Protector Wang, why has a precious such as yourself made the trip personally?"

"Hmph!" Protector Wang coldly snorted.

"The roads here haven't been peaceful lately. Because of this, there's a

need to strengthen the defenses, so I decided to come personally. Stop wasting my time, is this is the child you wanted to nominated?

“Yes, yes, this is my nephew. I hope that Protector Wang will take care of him.”

Looking at the impatient look on Protector Wang face, Third Uncle immediately retrieved a heavy-looking pouch and tossed it over to Protector Wang.

After he assessed the weight of the pouch, Protector Wang’s impatient demeanor relaxed visibly.

“Fatty Han, haha you sure know how people’s hearts work! Don’t worry, on the road back, I will make sure that all of your nephew’s needs are well cared for. Anyway, it is getting pretty late now, let us be on our way.”

Chapter 3: Seven Mysteries Sect

The smell inside the carriage was unpleasant, but this could hardly be surprising. The optimal seating capacity for this carriage was only ten people, but currently, there were 30 young children squeezed into the carriage. Even if young children had smaller bodies than adults, the space inside the carriage was intolerably cramped.

The intelligent Han Li, when he first entered the carriage, had already chosen a seat near to the sides and was now stealthily observing the other children.

The children who had registered or been nominated to take the test at the Seven Mysteries Sect could be segregated into three different groups based on their clothing and bearing.

In the first group, there was a youth wearing silk clothing seated in the center of the carriage, surrounded by the majority of the children.

This youth's name was Wu Yan. He was 13 years old, one of the oldest children to be seated inside the carriage. Normally, he would not be even here since his age had already exceeded the age limit, but one of his older female cousin was married to someone of authority inside the Seven Mysteries Sect. Therefore, Wu Yan's age was purposely overlooked and he was allowed to join the selection. Wu Yan's family ran a martial arts dojo, so he had access to a considerable amount of wealth. From a young age, he had practiced external martial arts. Even though his talent could not be considered excellent, when facing against Han Li's type—those children who had never practiced martial arts before—it was more than enough for Wu Yan to trample them underfoot.

It was very clear that children like Wu Yan, those with backings from powerful and wealthy families and had practiced martial art, could be considered the elite within the group of children inside the carriage.

They were from different backgrounds: some came from the families of shopkeepers, some came from the families of workers, or families of craftsmen, etc. However, they all had one special thing in common :they

grew up in the city. Thus, from an early age, they had learnt from the elders of their family how to observe people and know what was beneficial for them. Because of this, these people surrounded Wu Yan and repeatedly called out “Young Master Wu” and “Big Brother Wu” to curry favor. Wu Yan seemed to be used to being fawned over.

The third group of people were people like Han Li: this group came from remote and poor villages. They usually made do with what they had, were poor, and had suffered a life of hardship and strife. Only five to six people belonged to this third group, creating a minority inside the carriage. They usually kept to themselves, and had a quiet demeanor, not even daring to speak or laugh loudly. They were a refreshing change when compared to those loud children.

After the horse carriage exited Green Ox Town, it sped westward and made a few detours to visit other locations and collect even more children. On the fifth day, they managed to arrive at the Celestial Rainbow Mountain, the home of the Seven Mysteries Sect, near sundown.

The first thing the children saw after exiting the carriage was the beautiful, captivating sunset. It was only when Protector Wang started to rally the children that they woke up from their daze and continued proceeding forward.

Celestial Rainbow Mountain was originally Setting Wind Mountain. Legend has it that during ancient times, a five-coloured wind blew past this location, instantly transforming the mountain. After this place was discovered by humans, they realized how beautiful the sunset looked behind the rosy pink clouds. Inspired by the majestic image, the humans decided to rename this place Celestial Rainbow Mountains.

The Celestial Rainbow Mountain was the second largest mountain in the Jing Province after the Bai Mang Mountain. It was extremely spacious, spanning a radius of ten Li. The Celestial Rainbow Mountain was actually a mountain range consisting of ten mountain peaks, each of them being incredibly dangerous, and under the control of the various divisions of the Seven Mysteries Sect. The main mountain peak of the Celestial Rainbow Mountain was named the “Setting Sun Summit”; it was treacherous and

dangerous beyond comparison. Not only was it extremely steep, there was only a single path between summit and the foot of the mountain. After the Seven Mysteries Sect rebuilt their roots in this area, they set up a total of thirteen checkpoints on the path up the mountain. Some of these checkpoints were hidden while others were out in the open. They were prepared for every single route that the Feral Wolf Gang might use to invade the mountain.

As Han Li followed the escorts in front of the group, he surveyed his nearby surroundings. Suddenly, the escorts stopped as waves of friendly and amicable voices rang out.

“Little Brother Wang, why did you arrive so late? You’re two days late.”

“Division Head Yue, we were delayed by the journey here, sorry for causing you to worry.” Protection Wang, standing in front of all the children, replied respectfully as he bowed to a red-faced old man. Protector Wang’s stern facade was instantly replaced by a look of fawning.

“Which batch of children is this?”

“This is the batch number seventeen.”

“En!” This Division Head Yue pompously looked towards Han Li and the other children.

“Send them to the courtyard, let them rest for tonight. Tomorrow morning, we’ll begin the selection process. Send those who fail or break the rules back down the mountain.”

“Understood, Division Head Yue.”

Walking atop of the mountain’s stone steps, the children were tremendously excited, but no one dared to speak loudly. Despite their young age, the children somehow knew that this place would determine their destiny.

Protector Wang was in the lead and greeted several figures on the way to the children’s sleeping quarters. It could be seen that he was familiar with a lot people and was quite popular in the region.

The majority of the people they met on their way were all wearing green clothes and equipped with a blade or sword. Even those that appeared empty handed wore pouches full of mysterious items around their waists. From their actions, one could tell that all of these people were somewhat proficient at martial arts.

Han Li and the rest of the children were brought to a mountain peak that seemed lower in height in comparison to the other mountain peaks. On the summit, there was a house made of mud, built for the children to sleep in during the night. As he slept, Han Li dreamt that he was wearing silk, with a golden sword in his hands, possessing peerless martial arts and trampling on those who bullied him back in the village. He continued to dream until the second morning, when he reluctantly awoke, reminiscing the satisfying feeling of sleep.

Protector Wang did not let the children enjoy breakfast. Instead, he brought all of the children down the mountain to a steep slope containing many bamboo shoots. There, Division Head Yue and a few other youths whom Han Li didn't recognize were already waiting for them.

Chapter 4: Bone Refining Cliff

In front of the children, Division Head Yue hollered, “Everyone, listen up. Inside the bamboo forest, there’s a small path on which you’ll proceed forward. At the end of the path, you will reach the Bone Refining Cliff of the Seven Mysteries Sect. The first obstacle you will face is the bamboo forest, the second obstacle will be the traversing the stony region, and your last obstacle, shall be ascending the cliff. Only those who have managed to climb the Bone Refining Cliff by noon will be disciples of my Seven Mysteries Sect. Even if you finish after noon, although you can’t be an Inner Disciple, you can still become a Unofficial Disciple as long as your performance demonstrates remarkable prowess.

Han Li naturally did not understand what it meant to be a Unofficial Disciple. He only knew that all he had to do was to climb the cliff. Casting his gaze forward at the uneven, steep slope, he saw many lengthy bamboo shoots sprawled across the surface of the cliff. Seeing this, it seemed that the first obstacle should be pretty easy!

Studying the other children, Han Li was unwilling to lose to those in his age group. The atmosphere quickly became tense for the other children as well.

Division Head Yue cast a glance at the rising sun and said, “Okay, it’s almost time, prepare to set off! Don’t be afraid, your seniors will be protecting you from behind in case there’s any danger.”

Han Li turned his head and glanced at those unrecognizable youths.

These people were the senior disciples, so they should be from an earlier batch. Han Li could not help but think, “How impressive, if I managed to join them, could I wear the same robes of an Inner Disciple?”

As he was blindly pondering, Han Li discovered that the other children had already rushed into the bamboo forest. Seeing that he was left behind, Han Li quickly started moving forward..

Once the thirty children rushed in, they stopped moving as a group and scattered within the spacious bamboo forest. Behind Han Li was a lanky

senior disciple with a cold look on his face, silently following Han Li. Han Li was a little fearful, but he did not dare to start a conversation and waste time. Slightly intimidated, he lowered his body and proceeded treading on the steep slope.

This stretch of bamboo forest looked ordinary on the outside, but after Han Li walked for a distance, he found that it was slowly becoming more and more difficult to move forward. His footsteps got heavier, and gradually, Han Li began to use one hands to pull the bamboo shoots, using the momentum of the bamboo springing back to its original position to propel him forward..

Han Li persisted in this manner for quite some time, At a certain point, he became extremely exhausted, so he had no choice but to find a empty space to sit down and rest, his breath leaving him in heavy bursts of air.

After taking a breather, Han Li turned his gaze and saw the lanky senior behind him. Although the ground was very steep, this senior disciple was standing nonchalantly on the ground as if this was nothing to him. His body was totally devoid of dirt, standing erect like the bamboo shoots near by, while he silently looked at Han Li in the distance.

Looking at the cold glance of this senior, Han Li felt fear in his heart, and rapidly turned his head back. He also heard sounds of heavy breathing in front and deduced that one of the faster children was also making use of this opportunity to rest. After a short break, Han Li swiftly resumed his journey.

The slope was perilously steep, and Han Li's energy reserve got smaller and smaller.

He decided to lie flat on the ground and claw his up forward instead of moving on his legs so that if he exhausted his energy, he would not fall flat on his face. Luckily, his clothes were made of strong materials; if not, his limbs and knees joint might have been damaged by being dragged across the rocky ground.

As he almost reached the end of the bamboo forest, Han Li felt that it was very tough to complete the last few steps. This was because as the

stones and rocks on the ground increased, the number of bamboo shoots decreased.

Han Li finally reached the point where there were no more bamboo shoots for him to use for support. Han Li slowly moved inch by inch past this last stretch of road and overcame the first obstacle.

The moment he walked out of the bamboo forest, he could only see a vast expanse of land. In front of him was an incomparably huge, rocky mountain. On top of the gargantuan mountain were a few skinny kids, slowly climbing up the stone cliff along with a few senior disciples keeping a close watch on them. Han Li did not dare to hesitate any longer and rushed to make his way to the front of the huge rocky mountain.

The mountain consisted of layers and layers of sedimentary rocks stacked upon each other and looked pretty eroded. In some places, the stones crumbled when touched. Of course, there were also solid slabs of stones, but finding them was extremely perilous. Han Li had only practiced the most rudimentary of martial arts and his hands were already filled with injuries after his trek through the bamboo forest. At the same time, his clothes were torn and tattered around his knees, and the flesh and muscles hidden by his clothing were also scraped and injured. Although the wound on his knee was small, Han Li gritted his teeth every time it came into contact with the jagged rocks, the pain almost more than he could bear.

The few children in the lead had already climbed the furthest. Seeing the others ahead of him, Han Li refused to give up. The moment any thoughts of giving up flashed past his mind, images of his Third Uncle and his family would appear, giving him the motivation to carry on. With the memories of those he loved urging him to continue, Han Li relentlessly proceeded forward.

Before Han Li left for the Inner Disciple Examination, Han Li's father and Third Uncle reminded Han Li that the test would be extremely tough. If he did not persevere to the end, Han Li would have no chances of joining the Seven Mysteries Sect. At this moment, Han Li no longer cared about joining the sect. Instead, the only source of motivation pushing him

forward was an unwillingness to give in and the urgency to catch up to the others in the lead.

Han Li raised his head and noticed that Wu Yan was currently in the lead. Wu Yan was older than Han Li and had even practice Martial Arts; not surprisingly, he had a stronger body compared to the other kids.

Once again, Han Li turned his gaze backwards and saw that he had surpassed quite a few children, many of which were still rushing forward. Sucking in a deep breath, Han Li increased the speed of his ascent.

Despite of exhausting the majority of his strength, he still hadn't shortened the distance between him and those in the lead. As the unyielding sun climbed towards the center of the sky, Han Li's body got heavier and heavier, making it harder for him to reach the summit. In the meantime, Wu Yan had already reached the top of the huge mountain.

Near the summit of the 30 Zhang tall mountain was the incredibly steep Bone Refining Cliff. Over ten ropes, each with knots the size of a fist, hung from the top of the cliff. Wu Yan selected one began to climb up the cliff.

Han Li gazed over at Wu Yan, who was in the lead, and felt resigned in his heart. He knew that he could not catch up to those in front in the short amount of time that left until noon.

The notion of failing was quickly erased by the sudden pain that flared up from his injuries. The waves of fiery pain sapped the strength from his limb. Feeling his body fall downward, Han Li frantically grasped a stone with one hand. His heart was beating erratically as he rapidly pasted his body onto the side of the mountain, not daring to make any sudden motions.

After a moment, he calmed down, using his hand to test the strength of the stone slab. Only after he determined it was secured in place did he manage to let go of his worries.

Looking downwards, Han Li saw that the lanky senior was in a half-squatting position with his arms extended out, preparing to catch Han Li if he fell. Seeing that Han Li was safe, however, the senior retracted his

arms.

Han Li felt relief in his heart. If he really fell down the cliff, all of his efforts would have been wasted! After a short moment, he slowly inched forward and crawled towards the remaining ropes hanging down the Bone Refining cliff.

Finally, he arrived at the bottom of a rope. The sun had almost reached the center of the sky, indicating that there was only one hour before the time limit was up. At this moment, Wu Yan had already ascended the cliff and he turned his head to gaze at the remaining children. Just as Han Li was climbing the rope, his gaze coincidentally met Wu Yan, only to see him giving a thumbs down gesture to the slower competitors. After laughing maniacally, Wu Yan continued onward.

With anger rising in his heart, Han Li grabbed ahold of the rope and began to climb.

However, Han Li had long since used up all his energy. Currently, even holding the rope tightly was a challenge for him, let alone climbing the rope.

Miraculously, Han Li climbed up to the first knot on his rope. Sitting on it, he felt as if that his body had turned into cotton, unable to move a single finger. He turned his head and look at all the children behind him. Some of them had already given up, sitting down on the stone mountain and breathing heavily. Like Han Li, they had exhausted all of their strength and were on the verge of collapse.

A bitterness rose in his heart; he had underestimated this test too much. Luckily, he was not one of the last few children who had given up. Looked at the senior disciples' cold gazes, he decided to carry on. Even though he had no chances of completing the test before noon, finishing late was better than hanging limp on a rope..

Han Li extended both of his stiff hands and used the strength had recovered during his break to slowly climb up the rope. but at this moment, Han Li hands stopped responding to his will; he even lacked the strength maintain a grip on the rope. Han Li paused there, lingering for a

moment before reluctantly deciding to remain there seated on the knot.

Chapter 5: Doctor Mo

After a brief moment, Han Li felt a tightening sensation on his waist as his body grew light. His body was suddenly lifted upwards.

Turning his head, Han Li saw the lanky senior helping him ascend the cliff. With one hand around Han Li's waist, the senior disciple climbed up the cliff with nimble legs. Han Li could not help but noticed that the sun had already reached the centre of the skies. It was noon.

"So I failed the test after all." Han Li felt depression set in in his heart. It seemed unfair. Even though he had desperately pushed forward, almost to the point of disregarding his life, why couldn't he compared the other children?

In an instant, the Bone Refining Cliff appeared before him. There were six other children resting on top of the cliff. Out of the six, only Wu Yan had the strength to have a conversation with a middle-aged old man wearing a dark blue garb. Division Head Yue as well as Protector Wang were also standing near him. They were waiting for the senior disciples to escort the rest of the children up the Bone Refining Cliff.

After all the children had been escorted up the cliff, Division Head Yue stepped forward with a solemn expression on his face as he began to address the kids:

"This time round, only seven of you passed. Out of this group, six will enter my Bai Duan Division and formally become our sect's Inner Disciples." Division Head Yue spoke slowly at the crowd of children.

"As for Wu Yan, the first disciple to reach the top of the Bone Refining Cliff, he performed outstandingly and, as such, will be directly sent to the Seven Supreme Division to learn the sect's secret skills and martial arts." After speaking, Division Head Yue glanced at the old man wearing the dark blue garb. The old man twirled his beard around one hand while nodding in satisfaction at Division Head Yue..

"As for the others... ," Division Head Yue contemplated the outcome of the remaining children for a moment before rubbing his chin and saying

softly:

“Zhang Tie and Han Li, although these two did not pass the test, they still performed admirably. Their determination will allow them to cope with the pain of practicing martial arts. The two of you will be Unofficial Disciples assigned to an instructor of our sect for the next half year. After half a year, you would be tested again. If you pass, you’ll be able to become Inner Disciples, but if you fail, you would be sent to join the Outer Disciples, helping the sect handle its external affairs.”

Han Li stole a glance at the person named Zhang Tie. Like Han Li, Zhang Tie had begun climbing the rope but failed due to reach the summit of the Bone Refining Cliff before midday.

“Protector Wang, give the rest of the children some silver coins and send them back to their homes.” said Division Head Yue as he gave a cold stare at the children who failed the exam.

“Understood!”

Protector Wang complied with the order and he led the remainder of the children back down the cliff.

“Zhang Jun, Wu Ming Rui, the two of you will assist me in sending the rest of these children to the Vice Division Head and Instructor Li.”

Two senior disciples stepped forward and separated Han Li and the rest into two groups before leading them down the cliff. One of the senior disciples was the lanky senior that had always been behind Han Li. As they were descending the cliff, Han Li could not help but steal a glance at Wu Yan and discovered that he was still chatting with the old man in a dark blue robe, seemingly without any intent of moving from the spot.

“He’s different from the rest of you. In the future, he will most likely be a core disciple. Only core disciples are sent to the Seven Supreme Division to train in the sect’s secret arts. Once he completes his training, at the very least, he will have the rank of a Protector.” The voice belonged to the long and thin face, who could tell what Han Li was thinking. From his tone, Han Li could hear undisguised hints of envy mixing with jealousy.

“Hmmpf, isn’t Wu Yan just pulling strings and depending on his family’s connections? If it wasn’t for his older cousin being married to Sect Leader Ma, how could he be selected as a core disciple with such meager skill? He already surpassed the age limit but he was still sent to the Seven Supreme Division,” the senior said in a freezing tone that was comparable to a cold wind on a winter day.

“Zhang Jun, have you gone mad? How dare you gossip about the Sect Leader’s decisions? If this news was spread, both of us could suffer from cruel punishments and end up in dire straits!” The other senior with the long and thin face, after hearing Zhang Jun’s words, felt a shock in his heart and rapidly checking his surroundings to make sure no one heard Zhang Jun. Only after discovering that there were no other disciples did he heave a sigh of relief.

The senior with the cold countenance snorted, as if he were harbouring hatred in his heart, but after Wu Ming Rui’s warning, he stopped talking. Only then did Han Li understand that the senior with the cold countenance was Zhang Jun. Listening to their conversation, Han Li could roughly understand what they were talking about. The fact that Wu Yan entered the Seven Supreme Division because of the backing of the Sect Leader rather than on his own skills!

As they walked along the mountain path, these two seniors both thought of the sect’s internal affairs, which filled them with sadness. Lacking the mood to converse, they silently led the children forward. The rest of the children also dared not speak out of turn; perhaps they were thinking of the differences between the Seven Mysteries Sect and their home towns.

Just as they were passing through a forested region, a sixty year old man emerged from the woods. He was tall and thin with a yellow tinge to his skin and a head full of white hair. As he approached them, he coughed with every step, causing many of them to worry that he was suffering a great deal and could collapse at any moment.

The senior disciples, upon seeing this old man, did not show a trace of worry on their faces. Instead, they respectfully greeted the old man with a

bow.

“Doctor Mo, this disciple greets you. Is there anything that you need this disciple to handle?” Zhang Jun, unlike his previously cold demeanour, now had an expression full of respect. To Zhang Jun, this old man in front of him, was worthy of more respect than Division Head and even the Sect Leader.

“Oh, is this the latest batch of disciples?” The old man continued coughing and asked with a hoarse voice.

“Yes, among the eight of them, six are official Inner Disciples and two are Unofficial Disciples,” responded Zhang Jun.

“Coincidentally, I’m currently in need of some manpower, specifically an alchemy apprentice and an herb gatherer. Let these two follow me instead.” Doctor Mo randomly raise his finger and pointed, just as luck would have it, towards Han Li and Zhang Tie, the two Unofficial Disciples.

“This disciple will obey your words. These two Unofficial Disciples actually caught eyes of the esteemed Doctor Mo, their karma must be exceptional...The two of you, why are you still standing there? Hurry and come to pay your respects to Doctor Mo. If you are able to learn a thing or two about the arts of healing from this esteem elder, you will be extremely fortunate.” The two seniors had no traces of hesitation or objection on their face. The senior with the long and thin face, Wu Ming Rui, flattered Doctor Mo in order to curry favor with him..

Han Li and Zhang Tie, upon seeing the two senior disciples’ sudden change of heart, had no objections. They could only accept in silence and follow the old man into the forest.

Doctor Mo led the two of them, and down a small path that meandered through the forest. The path turned east and west before suddenly stopping in front of an entrance leading to a luscious green valley.

On the left side of the valley was a courtyard used for farming medicinal herbs that emitted a fragrant smell into the air. After they entered the courtyard, Han Li spotted many herbs that were unknown to

him. On the right side of the valley were lines of houses in various sizes. Looking in all four directions, Han Li saw no exit besides the gateway from which they entered.

“This valley is called the God Hand Valley. Other disciples will not dare enter this valley unless they are suffering from injuries.” The old man stood in the middle of the line of houses and pointed to a smaller house. “For now, this will be your home. Rest and replenish your energy. When night falls, look for me in my house so I can inform you about several things.”

“The two of you can call me Old Mo.” The old man huffed and considered for a moment before saying:

“Doctor Mo is also acceptable.”

After speaking, Doctor Mo ignored the two of them and slowly walked towards an impressive looking house, coughing with each step.

Completely exhausted, Han Li did not bother to check with Zhang Tie before entering the house and selecting a bed to fall asleep on. He was satisfied, because at this moment, he was halfway to becoming an Inner Disciple of the Seven Mysteries Sect.

Chapter 6: Nameless Oracular Formula

“Get up, get up.”

A barely audible sound came from above Han Li, rousing him from his deep slumber. As soon as he opened his eyes, a huge face appeared in front of him. In shock, Han Li pushed himself backwards. Only then was he able to see that the owner of the face that had frightened him to death was the boy named Zhang Tie.

“Hurry up and come eat something. After you’ve finished, we need to see Old Mo.” Zhang Tie passed some steaming white buns over to Han Li.

“Where did you find this food?” Han Li stared blankly for a moment before accepting the buns.

“At a kitchen near the valley, I saw a ton of people eating food, so I also grabbed a portion. After I had finished, I realised that you hadn’t eaten yet, so I grabbed two buns for you.” Zhang Tie smiled sincerely at Han Li.

“Thank you very much, Brother Zhang.” Han Li was somewhat touched. Seeing that Zhang Tie looked quite a bit older than himself, he couldn’t help but blurt out the words “Brother Zhang.”

“No...no problem. I’m too used to labor. If I’m idle even for just a moment, I always feel a bit....uncomfortable. If you ever need any help in the future, don’t hesitate to tell me. I have nothing else but strength.” Zhang Tie seemed to be somewhat embarrassed, as he began to stammer.

Han Li hadn’t eaten breakfast or lunch and was somewhat starved. In just a few bites, he devoured one bun. With just a bit more effort, both of the large buns completely disappeared into his stomach.

“It’s getting late, we should go see Old Mo.” Han Li burped a few times and looked out the window towards the setting sun. After mentally calculating the time, he decided that it was probably about time to go see Doctor Mo.

Zhang Tie didn’t object, following Han Li to Doctor Mo’s house.

There were rows of bookshelves along all four walls of Doctor Mo’s

residence. These shelves were densely packed with various books.

“Old Mo!”

“Old Mo!”

.....

Doctor Mo's back was tightly pressed against his chair as he was currently engrossed in reading the book in his hands. He didn't seem to have noticed the two people's arrival, nor had he heard their greetings. The two of them were still children after all, so when they saw Doctor Mo ignore them, they were at a loss on what to do, unsure of what would be the best course of action. Thus, they could only stand to one side and wait.

Finally, by the time Han Li's feet had begun to turn numb, Doctor Mo slowly placed his book down onto the table next to him. He coldly looked over at the two children and picked up his teacup to drink a few sips before slowly saying:

“From this day on, you two will be accepted as my unofficial disciples. I will teach you some general knowledge on picking medicinal plants and refining medicines. I may also teach you two some life-saving healing techniques. But I will absolutely not teach you any martial arts.” Doctor Mo expressionlessly put down his teacup.

“I will teach you two a set of body and spiritual cultivation chants. Although it won't allow you to successfully subdue your enemy, it will strengthen your bodies. If you guys really want to learn some martial arts, you can go learn them from some other instructors. If you do so, I won't object, but I'll check your progression on this set of cultivation chants in half a year. If you don't meet the standard, I'll force you out to become an outer disciple. Do you two understand?” Doctor Mo's tone suddenly became much more serious. It looked like he attached great importance to this set of chants.

“We understand.” Han Li and Zhang Tie replied in unison.

“You two should leave now. Come back tomorrow morning.” Doctor Mo

waved his hands at the two of them, gesturing for them to go out. He then picked up his book and began reading it again.

Before Han Li left, he couldn't help but glance back at the book in Doctor Mo's hands. It was a pity that he didn't know how to read; he could only tell that the title was made up of three large, black characters. Unfortunately, Han Li didn't recognize them.

As soon as Han Li walked out of Doctor Mo's residence, Han Li couldn't help but let out the breath he had been holding. He didn't know why, but just now, he hadn't even dared to breathe in Doctor Mo's presence. His mind had also been incredibly tensed. Now that he had left, he immediately loosened up, returning to his normal state.

During the following few days, Han Li's excitement never faded. He'd finally become a disciple of the Seven Mysteries Sect. Although he was still just a Unofficial Disciple, it was still better than the children that had been sent home. Even if he didn't pass the test in half a year, he could still become an outer disciple like Third Uncle. In Han Li's opinion, Third Uncle was a person of great status and position, so he didn't concern himself over the examination in half a year. He even secretly hoped from the bottom of his heart that he wouldn't pass. That way, he could leave the mountain earlier to see his parents and his most beloved younger sister.

During the following few days, Doctor Mo would teach them some medicinal knowledge in the mornings. In the afternoons, he would make them study the body's twelve main meridians, energy channels, and acupoint locations. As for the little he taught them of martial arts, he made them maintain the horse stance and hit straw dummies.

A month later, the two of them were completely isolated from the other children. They no longer spent time learning anything else besides the chant. Ever since Doctor Mo had begun teaching them, they spent most of their time practicing the nameless chant. Doctor Mo strictly ordered them to not tell the chants to anyone else. If even a small segment was leaked, Doctor Mo would harshly punish them and kick them out of his apprenticeship.

During this period of time, Han Li began to have a better understanding of the Seven Mysteries Sect and Doctor Mo. The Seven Mysteries Sect had a disciple named Wang Lu, who possessed the teachings handed down by the Sovereign Seven Supreme. Wang Lu became the Sect Leader of the Seven Mysteries Sect, and he split the sect with the help of the three other Sect Leaders. They divided the sect into two segments – the Inner and Outer Branch. The Outer Branch had a total of four divisions, namely the Flying Bird Division, Treasure Gathering Division, Four Seas Division, and External Blade Division. The Inner Branch also had four divisions, namely the Hundred Forge Division, Seven Supreme Division, Consecrated Division, and Blood Blade Division. In addition to the Inner and Outer Branch, there was a Council of Elders that reported to the Vice Sect Leaders and the Sect Leader.

Doctor Mo was originally not a disciple of the Seven Mysteries Sect. A few years ago, Sect Leader Wang carelessly fell into an enemy's trap while outside of the Celestial Rainbows Mountain and was heavily injured by the multiple attacks from the opposing party. As he wavered on the brink of death, his allies were unable to do anything about it. Just then, they happened to encounter Doctor Mo whose brilliant healing and effective medicines saved Sect Leader Wang's life. Sect Leader Wang naturally couldn't help but feel extremely grateful for Doctor Mo. He later found out that in addition to his profound medical expertise, Doctor Mo was a strong martial arts practitioner, which convinced Sect Leader Wang to invite Doctor Mo to join his sect. The elders carefully picked a small valley in the mountains to erect a residence specifically for Doctor Mo's use in order to make the shift as comfortable as possible. The valley soon became a venerated place within the Seven Mysteries Sect thanks to Doctor Mo. Although none of the disciples had ever witnessed his skills, nor did they know how strong his martial arts was, Doctor Mo had used his brilliant medical expertise to save quite a few disciples' lives. Thus, although he was normally expressionless and was a man of few words, he received a great amount of respect from the Inner Disciples.

Chapter 7: The Difficulties of Cultivating

Han Li slowly transferred energy from his meridians back to his dantian. He had managed to reach the 7th cycle of Qi circulation today, and Han Li knew that his body had already reached the limit of what it could handle. If he were to try to do another cycle, all his meridians would completely rupture, inciting a pain worse than death. Even though he was a courageous person, Han Li couldn't help but break out in cold sweat at the thought of this pain.

It had already been half a year since Han Li joined the sect, and the official Secret Disciple exam had ended a bit over 2 months ago.

Only a small portion of the Secret Disciples were officially promoted to the Inner Branch. Most Unofficial Disciples weren't able to pass this point and had no other choice but to pack their belongings and become a disciple of the Outer Branch.

The children that didn't pass would generally enter the Treasure Gathering Division or the Flying Bird Division. For those that showed outstanding performances, they would receive another step further in their training and would then have the chance to join the more respected External Blade Division. Of course, it was only natural that the Four Seas Division was the most respected of the four Divisions, but unfortunately they only accepted those that made names for themselves through their martial arts. If one didn't have a certain level of expertise in martial arts, it was pointless for them to even dream about joining the Four Seas Division; these immature and inexperienced children were even less worthy of any mention.

When Han Li recalled the details of the examination from two months ago, he couldn't help but feel a bit frightened.

A few dozen miles away from the Celestial Rainbow Mountains was a neighboring desolate mountain where a group of people were sparring. There were a few senior disciples who excelled in martial arts and were fiercely locked in combat. With each and every test, Han Li couldn't help

but to feel a little bit of joy at the misery of others.

During their entire stay at the Seven Mysteries Sect, Han Li and Zhang Tie had never taken such a terrifying test before. Doctor Mo had said that his examination would only test them on the cultivation chant, but Han Li didn't believe the test would be as easy as it sounded. Looking back, Han Li could clearly remember the intense effort he had to put into his cultivation.

According to Doctor Mo, this oracular chant was only a single part of a set. Within half a year, Han Li and Zhang Tie had successfully comprehended the first stage of the cultivation chant, which Doctor Mo would be examining. If the two were able to overcome Doctor Mo's expectations, then they could become Doctor Mo's personal disciples and even share the same benefits as the Inner Disciples.

Not to mention, Han Li had also heard from others that the treatment the Inner Disciples and Outer Disciples received was so vastly different that it spoke volumes of how enormous of a difference there was between the two. He then realized how ignorant he had been and cast away any thoughts of becoming an Inner Disciple. Han Li would be satisfied by just joining the Seven Mysteries Sect and receiving some silver to send back to his family. Everything else had seemed irrelevant because, above all else, he truly desired to help his poverty-stricken family. His only goal were to be able to take money home so he could provide his family with a better life.

After learning Doctor Mo's chant, Han Li had not once left the house. He spent every possible moment of day and night relentlessly practicing the chant. Because Doctor Mo hadn't given them any pointers on how to cultivate, Han Li could only theorize by himself. After discussing with other young cultivators, he discovered they were using the Seven Mysteries Sect's "Positive Yang Energy", a self-meditated cultivation method.

Relying on both the chant and the Positive Yang Energy, he cultivated assiduously for 3 months, but Han Li was shocked to realize that his progress was extremely slow! He had spent a great deal of effort and yet

he was rewarded with one small thread of cool energy inside of his body. The energy was so infinitesimal that he could barely notice that it was there. If he hadn't checked his body carefully for results, he would have not noticed the strand of energy..

Could this be the rumoured True Qi the instructors had talked about? Han Li suddenly came to this realization.

The other disciples cultivating the Positive Yang Energy had told him that there was a distinct flow of warm energy and Qi being generated within their bodies. However, the thread of energy in Han Li's body was extremely cold, completely opposite from the energy gained from cultivating Positive Yang Energy! Looking at the results, it was obvious Han Li was very far behind the other disciples.

Those who used the True Qi from the Positive Yang Energy cultivation were able to punch a fist-sized hole through a small tree trunk and leap three meters into the air. Han Li, however, after circulating the strange Qi in his body, felt practically no different from his normal state. The only difference he could tell was that his spirit was more vigorous and his appetite was even more ravenous than before he came to the mountain. But what use was that? Seeing that the other children on the mountains were gaining ridiculous power, Han Li couldn't help but feel dejected.

After realizing that he had barely made any progress, Han Li had nearly given up on his several months of hard work. He thought that with such a huge gap between himself and the others, he would not have a chance to catch up to the other children in the remaining amount of time before Doctor Mo's test and successfully pass it. It would be better to plan for his trip back home instead.

Incidentally, Han Li one day came across the cultivating Zhang Tie and realized something. Ever since Zhang Tie had started his cultivation with this mysterious oracular formula chant, his body showed no changes at all. There was no effect; not even a small amount of True Qi could be seen!

Knowing that he had at least succeeded in forming one strand of True

Qi, Han Li regained the confidence he had thrown away earlier. With the remaining amount of time, he furiously tried to cultivate the oracular chant.

He worked even harder than before, training like a madman.

Han Li began to use every single second to meditate and cultivate. Even when he was sleeping, he kept his body upright in a meditative position in hopes of having even a slight breakthrough. Of course, this intensive training method could not be maintained for longer than a few days. If he strained himself past his limit, his lack of sleep would make him unable to efficiently cultivate.

What puzzled Han Li the most was that after Doctor Mo imparted the oracular chant to the two of them, he stopped interacting with them. Even their questions on cultivation had been ignored by him as if he did not even notice their existence.

Every day, Doctor Mo would bring out the book with the three black characters written on the back cover and study it, staring intently as if the lines of text outlined the image of a beautiful woman and the cover was made of pure gold. At the beginning, Han Li and Zhang Tie thought that Doctor Mo no longer wanted to be a medical doctor but rather was studying bitterly to pass an imperial exam. After the two children learned to read, however, they recognized the three words on the back cover, which read "Scripture of Longevity." Doctor Mo was reading a book about how to cultivate oneself to the point of extending one's lifespan.

In that moment, the two children suddenly realized that Doctor Mo wasn't trying to pass the imperial exam; he was trying to live thousands of years like a river turtle.

(TL: turtles were thought to be able to live for thousands of years)

Chapter 8: Entering the Sect as a disciple

After half a year of relentless cultivation, Han Li was finally going to undertake Doctor Mo's test.

Zhang Tie was fidgeting as he stood close to Han Li. His behavior was nothing strange. Zhang Tie had told Han Li that for the past six months, he had made no progress on the oracular chant given to them by Doctor Mo.

Han Li knew that Zhang Tie's efforts in cultivating the oracular chant were no less intense than his own. Although Zhang Tie was unlike Han Li, who practiced like a madman, the efforts he expended could still be considered conscientious and diligent!

Strangely, the oracular chant seemed to be useless to Zhang Tie. No matter how much effort he put in, he wasn't able to produce even the slightest amount of effects. It seems like Zhang Tie would never successfully cultivate the oracular chant.

Han Li's mind was unsettled. He knew that Zhang Tie would probably fail the test. Even though Han Li was slightly successful in learning the oracular chant, he was not stronger than Zhang Tie in any way, so there was a high chance of both of them failing Doctor Mo's test.

Fearing the worst, Han Li assiduously cultivated. By the time of exam, the strange energy flowing in his body had increased by a little. If the energy was as thin as a strand of hair in the past, it was now slightly thicker, resembling a thread of cotton. Even so, this did not reassure Han Li, who feared he might not pass Doctor Mo's test.

"Are you guys prepared? Let me take a look at the fruits of your cultivation." Doctor Mo squinted his eyes as he sat and coldly stared at the two of them.

"We are ready!" Han Li and Zhang Tie could only put forth a bold face and agree.

Doctor Mo, slowly rose from his chair and stood up. He put the book

that always seemed to be nearby down on the table.

“Extend your hand”

“Circulate your Qi for me to see.”

Doctor Mo held Zhang Tie’s right wrist with one hand and placed his other hand on top of Zhang Tie’s Dantian.

After the time it took to brew a cup of tea, Doctor Mo retracted his hands and closely evaluated Zhang Tie.

Zhang Tie’s face was flushed as he nervously put his hands behind his back, lowering his head and not daring to look Doctor Mo in the eye. He knew Doctor Mo had most certainly discovered that he made no progress in the oracular chant and would probably punish him to teach the two of them a lesson.

“It’s your turn.”

To their surprise, Doctor Mo didn’t even show the slightest indication that he would punish Zhang Tie. Some slight hints of disappointment flashing past Doctor Mo’s eyes were the only reactions Doctor Mo had. After examining Zhang Tie, he turned to Han Li and motioned for him to come closer. He then held Han Li’s wrist and began the inspection.

“His touch feels just like ice. It doesn’t feel like the touch of a living human,” Han Li mused in his mind.

The skin on Doctor Mo’s hand was dried and full of calluses. As he held Han Li’s hand, Han Li could feel slight waves of sharp pain.

Perhaps it was because the external interference agitated the energy within Han Li’s body, but the strange flow of energy actually started to circulate by itself. It flowed through his meridians and energy channels, passed all his acupoints from his Dantian to his head, and flowed to his four limbs. It completed a full cycle before flowing back to his Dantian. The moment the strange flow of energy circulated throughout his entire body, Han Li’s pain from Doctor Mo’s touch immediately dissipated.

“Ai!” Doctor Mo involuntarily let out a sound of surprise; it appeared

that he had discovered the strange flow of energy in Han Li's body.

"Quick, circulate your energy according to that chant that I taught you once again." Although Doctor Mo tried his best to suppress his elation, traces of madness and excitement still flashed through his eyes, causing Han Li to be secretly alarmed.

"Slowly, slowly...let me take a good look." Doctor Mo added as his usually cold tone of voice became rushed, placing his other hand on Han Li's Dantian.

Han Li could feel both of Doctor Mo's hand tremble slightly. As Han Li circulated the strange energy, Doctor Mo became quite agitated.

"Not bad! Not bad! This feeling...this is the feeling that I wanted. I'm not wrong, I'm not mistaken! Hahaha"

Doctor Mo, after a thorough examination, could no longer hold back and started laughing maniacally, both his hands tightly clutched on Han Li's shoulder. Even his normal squinty eyes enlarged as they intensely stared at Han Li. It was as if he had seen a rare and valuable treasure, his eyes flashing with faint traces of madness.

Han Li's ears were ringing from Doctor Mo's unceasing laughter and he felt slight pain on his shoulder. Seeing the madness in Doctor Mo's eyes, Han Li could not help but feel terror in his heart.

"Good, very good." Doctor Mo, from the expressions on Han Li's face, could tell that he was terrified. Only then did Doctor Mo know that he had been overeager, so he controlled himself and regained his composure.

"In the future, you must work as hard as you're working right now. From this day onwards, you will be promoted to my personal disciple." After saying that, Doctor Mo released his tight grip from Han Li's shoulder and proceeded to pat him in encouragement.

Doctor Mo regained his usual calm look almost as if his loss of control had never happened. But from his occasional glances at Han Li, one could tell that he was still tremendously excited.

"As for you..." Doctor Mo finally shifted his gaze onto Zhang Tie.

Zhang Tie was thunderstruck by the events that unfolded earlier. Seeing that Doctor Mo shifted the topic of conversation to him, Zhang Tie awoke from his daze with a start.

Just thinking that he failed the assessment and would be asked to leave the mountain caused traces of bitterness to appear on Zhang Tie's face as he looked at Doctor Mo.

"Your talent is questionable. Despite such a long period of time, you still could not produce even a small trace of energy. Accepting you as my personal disciple would be too much of a stretch." Doctor Mo repeatedly shook his head.

Zhang Tie's heart fell down to the bottom of an abyss after seeing Doctor Mo shaking his head.

But suddenly, Doctor Mo seemed to have thought of something interesting, as he gazed at Zhang Tie with a bizarre expression in his eyes.

"Looking at your bone structure, I may have a suitable cultivation technique for you. I wonder if you are willing to learn from me.." Doctor Mo's sudden shift in conversation caught everyone by surprise. It was as if Doctor Mo wanted to allow Zhang Tie to pass the test.

The moment Zhang Tie heard Doctor Mo, how could he reject the offer? He immediately gave his consent and said that he would be willing to learn from Doctor Mo.

"Excellent! The two of you can depart first. Tomorrow, I will hand you both new cultivation techniques." It could be seen that Doctor Mo's current spirits was excellent!

Han Li and Zhang Tie both looked at each other, and felt that today's test had been full of twist and turns. After all, both of them actually passed, making them feel satisfied and pleased.

Chapter 9: Way of the Armored Elephant

Looking back, Han Li couldn't help but give a knowing smile.

In the half year that Han Li spent with Zhang Tie, because their personalities matched well with each other, the two had naturally become very close friends.

Han Li slowly stood from his crossed-legged position and rubbed his calves. After sitting in the cross-legged position and meditating for a long time, his legs had become numb, and even some of his bloodstreams felt clogged.

After kneading them for some times, his legs returned back to their normal state. Standing up, Han Li dusted himself in his usual custom before exiting the stone chamber.

Turning his head back to look at the stone chamber used for cultivation, Han Li couldn't help but sneer at himself.

This entire chamber was made of solid granite while the doors were made of a giant piece of crocidolite. If a normal human wanted to break into this room, he or she would need to spend at least three hours hacking at the doors with an enormous axe.

(TL: crocidolite: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riebeckite>)

In the Seven Mysteries Sect, only the Sect Leader, Elders, and Division Heads were allowed to use this type of silent cultivation chamber. Not even Inner Disciples were allowed to use them as they pleased! This cultivation chamber was created for those practicing profound cultivation techniques to guard their practice against any external disruption and in order to prevent being possessed by wandering spirits. Han Li didn't know what methods Doctor Mo had used, but the Sect somehow granted him the usage of his own personal cultivation stone chamber, built into the side of the cliff of the God Hand Valley.

After the cultivation chamber was built, Doctor Mo had assigned it for Han Li's sole use. Seeing such a gift, Han Li couldn't help but feel

humbled by Doctor Mo's benevolence.

Doctor Mo's treatment of Han Li was perhaps too good to be true. Ever since Han Li had become his official apprentice, Doctor Mo had personally dipped into his own supply of herbs for Han Li to consume. Not only that, Doctor Mo also created an unknown medicinal bath for him to soak his body in. Han Li didn't know what types of herbs were being used, but as he watched Doctor carefully refine those herbs, his normally impassive face revealed a hint of reluctance. Even Han Li could figure out that these herbs were extremely valuable.

Clearly these benefits were extremely useful to him, causing Han Li's cultivation speed to increase severalfold. Han Li had recently succeeded in mastering the first level of the mysterious formula chant imparted to him by Doctor Mo.

During his process of breaking through, his meridians had nearly ruptured several times and he had suffered from some moderate internal injuries. But thanks to Doctor Mo's expertise in the healing arts, the injuries to his meridians were easily repaired, and with the aid of the medicinal herbs, Han Li did not suffer from any serious, permanent damage.

Every time Han Li was even slightly injured, Doctor Mo would become even more worried than Han Li himself. This worry manifested itself the entire time he treated Han Li, making Doctor Mo very tense. It was only when Han Li's injuries began recovering that he let out a sigh of relief.

Doctor Mo's concern went far beyond that of a normal relationship between master and disciple and caused Han Li to feel a little uneasy about the situation. If it were not for his Third Uncle or the fact that no one ever walked out from these valleys, Han Li would have thought that Doctor Mo was actually his long lost relative based on the attention that he had been showing to Han Li.

(TL: the author did not make it clear how Han Li's Third Uncle prevented him from thinking this)

Walking out of the cultivation chamber, Han Li lazily stretched his body

and walked away from the cliff. After he had become an official disciple, Han Li and Zhang Tie moved from their original quarters into their own personal house.

As he passed by Zhang Tie's room, Han Li shot a glance inside.

As it turns out, Zhang Tie wasn't inside. Han Li thought that he was probably by the Crimson Water Peak's waterfall, cultivating his new martial arts technique.

After the examination, Doctor Mo instructed Han Li to continue practicing the oracular formula chant and refused to teach him any martial arts. However, in an attempt to pacify Han Li, Doctor Mo personally instructed Han Li in the art of healing without holding anything back. Whenever Han Li had a question about medicine, Doctor Mo would answered right away, even going as far as allowing Han Li to look through the various books in Doctor Mo's library to find an answer to his question.

As for Zhang Tie, Doctor Mo fulfilled his previous promise and imparted a set of martial arts to him.

The martial arts Zhang Tie practiced was extremely peculiar. According to Doctor Mo, it was an extremely obscure branch of martial arts named the "Way of the Armored Elephant". Even the name of this particular martial art was rarely heard of, let alone the existence of practitioners who actually cultivated it.

It differed from the martial arts of regular practitioners in Jiang Hu. Generally, the progression of cultivation for normal martial arts ranged from easy to difficult. As the level increased, so would the difficulty. Thus, the higher the level, the more effort it would take for one to achieve a breakthrough. Zhang Tie's particular martial art style was divided into 9 stages, with the initial 3 stages being the easiest to cultivate, following the same principle as normal martial arts. However, starting from the fourth stage, the difficulty of breaking through was increased to a monstrous level in addition to suffering the excruciating backlash caused by practicing the Way of the Armored Elephant. Many cultivators of this

set of martial arts could not bear such excruciating pain and would stop their progression at the fourth level. Not to mention the 5th level nor the 6th level, the excruciating pain would only increase with each level!

(TL: Jiang Hu= World of Martial Artists)

After breaking through from the 6th stage into the 7th, there would be no further bottlenecks, and cultivation would be much smoother. The only drawback was that the cultivator would need to suffer from monthly bouts of intense pain.

This intimidated many people who desired to cultivate the Way of the Armored Elephant. This particular branch of martial arts was slowly dying out.

This martial arts style was very peculiar. When it reached a high enough level, its strength would become truly astounding. It was said that those who reached the 9th stage had bodies as tough as gemstones. They were impervious to all weapons, even fire and water! Even palms strike, fist techniques, and legendary swords and sabres wouldn't be able to injure them.

But what made people most envious was that after cultivating this branch of martial art, practitioners would gain the tremendous strength of an elephant. After reaching a high enough level, their strength would be limitless. They were capable of catching live wolves and ripping tigers apart, as well as other unparalleled feats.

Those who had heard of this style both feared and adored it. Other than the creator of this martial art, there was no other individual who had managed to cultivate it to the 9th level. Legend has it that the creator of this martial art was born without the sense of pain! That was the reason why he was able to create such a perverse martial art and execute it to its greatest potential.

Although Doctor Mo had explained the benefits and consequences in its entirety to Zhang Tie, Zhang Tie had no concerns about the harm it could bring to his body. He coveted the strength the Way of the Armored Elephant could bring him and promised right away to cultivate in this

style of martial arts. Without even looking for another style suitable to him, Zhang Tie had already reached the peak of the first stage in two months.

In order to break through the first stage of the Way of the Armored Elephant, Doctor Mo had suggested that every afternoon, Zhang Tie should go to the Crimson Water Peak's waterfall and cultivate under the impact of the surging waters.

According to Zhang Tie, this method really did have a godly effect. The difference between the peak of the first stage to second stage was only paper thin, and as long as he worked a little harder, he would breakthrough the bottleneck with relative ease!

Chapter 10: Mysterious Bottle

Han Li slowly followed the path from the God Hand Valley out of force of habit. His steps automatically carried him towards the Crimson Water Peak.

He did not have anything important to do at the moment, and as such, he followed his normal schedule and visited Zhang Tie, who was training at the Crimson Water Peak. Zhang Tie grimaced in pain, allowing the impact of the waterfall to temper his body as he cultivated the Way of the Armoured Elephant.

Not everyone could withstand the torturous pain from cultivating this particular martial arts. Even the first stage already required one to suffer excruciating pain. To reach the 9th stage, wouldn't it require one to cultivate to the point of insanity, losing their skin in the process?

"Hmm I wonder if Zhang Tie already regrets his previous decision. The excruciating torture one had to endure to practice the Way of the Armored Elephant is impossible to imagine," Han Li thought as he walked, carelessly kicking the fallen leaves and branches that were blocking his way.

"Maybe after a few more days, the two of us will go and beg Doctor Mo for another martial arts skill for Zhang Tie so that he won't need to suffer from excruciating pain each time he practices." Having absorbed himself in thought trying to think of methods to allow Zhang Tie to escape from this torturous path of practice, Han Li slowly roused himself to look at his surroundings..

Han Li inclined his head as he gazed at the line of trees by his side. Currently, the year was approaching the late stages of autumn. The tree's branches were all naked and devoid of leaves. The red and golden leaves had fallen on the path and stalked into thick piles. Walking on them felt like walking on cotton. Han Li found this experience extremely comfortable.

In that moment, the sounds of weapons clashing drifted over from a

nearby mountain peak, as well as the many loud cheers.

After hearing the noises, Han Li glanced in the direction of the mountain peak, annoyed that his good mood had been disturbed.

The noise came from disciples of the Hundred Forge Division. They were training the disciples selected to join their division in the various arts of weaponry.

Everytime Han Li saw other sect members gathering and undergoing their training sessions, slight hints of jealousy surfaced in his heart. He wanted to wield a real weapon and demonstrate his skills as well. What a waste! After he officially became a disciple under Doctor Mo, he had been strongly forbidden from practicing such things. Doctor Mo strongly emphasized that Han Li was to devote all of his time to the nameless oracular chant.

Therefore, Han Li could only stare with wide and envious eyes. Occasionally, to scratch his itch, he would borrow a few weapons from some of the other sect members he was on good terms with and practice with them.

Seriously, how useful could it be to cultivate the mysterious oracular chant? Up until now, Han Li had not seen any positive effects of his constant cultivation. Other disciples had already strengthened their body and mastered impressive martial art techniques. If the path of martial arts was compared to a marathon, Han Li was sorely standing on the starting point, not advancing at all.

Even Zhang Tie, who had cultivated for two months, had some beneficial changes to show for his efforts. His skin and muscles had become tougher, and his level of strength was also noticeably higher than before.

However, if Doctor Mo had not accepted Zhang Tie as an Unofficial Disciple, he would not have passed the Unofficial Disciple Test two months ago. If he had not passed the test, then staying on the mountain would be impossible, let alone sending money back home!

If Zhang Tie was unable to cultivate another branch of martial arts, his

path would be forever sealed.

On one hand, Han Li was grumbling about the unfairness of their situation. On the other hand, he was reassuring himself that since he passed Doctor Mo's test, he would not be kicked out of the Seven Mysteries Sect.

Han Li retracted his gaze from the other sect members, but he continued to think about Doctor Mo's irritating commands. Distracted and in low spirits, he gazed at the two lines of trees alongside the road as pangs of dejection struck him.

All of a sudden, Han Li sucked in a mouthful of cool air, his facial expression turning ugly. Out of reflex, he squatted down and used both his hands to tightly clamp on the big toe of his right foot, doubling over in the grass. A sudden, painful flare-up had caught Han Li unaware. His face became as white as a pastry while waves of fiery pain assailed him from his right foot..

Evidently, Han Li had accidentally kick against an extremely hard object hidden in the piles of leaves.

Han Li arched his body and used both of his hands to wrap around his foot. After he lower his head and removed his shoes, he began to blowing heavily on his injured toe; while his brain flooded with pain, he was worried that his swollen toe might have been injured to an extent that would impact his day-to-day activities

After a long moment, Han Li craned his neck and peered downwards to that pile of leaves, trying to find the ungodly, dastardly stone that caused him to be injured.

Haphazardly lying about, the fallen leaves were all the same reddish yellow colour. They obscured him from finding the target he sought.

Han Li wrinkled his forehead, and surveyed the ground before finding a slightly long and thick tree branch. Holding the branch, he stood up carefully.

Unwilling to give up, Han Li used the branch in his hands and continued

to probe piles of leaves.

Ai! He spotted an object the size of a fist.

Han Li paused momentarily and considered the object in front of him. The culprit, the sinful object that caused injury to his great self, actually had the shape of an elongated bottle. The surface of it was stained with mud and its original color was impossible to discern. Overall, it looked extremely commonplace.

Initially, Han Li thought that this was an ordinary little bottle, but in his hands, the bottle was extraordinary heavy, its weight vastly different from that of a normal porcelain bottle.

Could this bottle be made of gold? No wonder it caused so much pain when he kicked it. but.. bottles made of gold were rarely seen...

Made of gold....? Han Li's interest in this bottle peaked as he temporarily forgot about the waves of pain arising from his toe.

As Han Li wiped off the excess layer of mud, the original colour of the bottle began to unveil itself. The bottle emanated a shiny green glow, and there were intricate black green leaf patterns engraved on its surface. At the head of the bottle, there was a bottle cap that tightly sealed the mouth of the bottle.

Hmm, could the interior be hiding something precious? Han Li placed the bottle close to his ear and gently shook the bottle, but he didn't feel any movements from the inside of the bottle.

Unwilling to give up, Han Li placed his hands on the cap of the bottle, and tried to pry it open. However, no matter how hard he tried, it was to no avail.

Curiosity was burning in his heart, and just when he was about to use another method to open it, the pain from his foot suddenly flared up again.

Damn! He had forgotten that the toe of his right leg had been injured after coming into contact with the porcelain bottle.

Looking at his injury, it seemed he could not visit Zhang Tie today. Han Li decided to return to his residence and apply some medicine on his injured toe before taking his time to figure out the secrets this mysterious bottle was holding

In order to keep the bottle from being spotted by others, Han Li stashed it inside his robes regardless of how dirty the bottle was. Turning back, he limped step by step back to his home.

Chapter 11: Difficult to Open Bottle

Han Li didn't meet many people on the way back except for a few senior disciples who were curious at why Han Li was limping his way back. But because he didn't say anything, they didn't pay much attention to him.

As he returned back to his room, the pain in his toe got increasingly unbearable. Han Li sat on his bed and took off his shoes to examine his injury.

The swelling was incredible! His right toe had an impressive bulge on it, while the cuticle on his toe turned blood red and resembled a big chili.

Han Li quickly took out a bottle of herbs from beneath his pillow. Concocted meticulously by Doctor Mo, this medicine sped up blood clotting to an astonishing degree. Doctor Mo didn't easily give away medicine of this caliber. It was originally meant for Zhang Tie, who would inevitably suffer an injury while practicing the Way of the Armored Elephant. Han Li didn't think that he would be the first to use the medicine.

Opening the medicinal bottle, a strong herbal fragrance filled the room. He applied a small amount on his injury and immediately felt a relaxing sensation. Just as Doctor Mo had said, it had an immediate effect; Elder Mo's medicine was truly amazing!

Han Li took a clean cloth and wrapped up his foot up before putting his shoes back on.

Excellent! The pain was slowly subsiding.

He began to take small steps, as if testing his pain threshold, nodding in satisfaction as he felt that moving was easier than before.

Now, it was time to solve the enigma posed by the mysterious bottle that had caused such an injury to him.

Han Li took out the bottle from his robes and wiped it cleanly to restore its natural luster.

This bottle wasn't all that big, and a single hand could wrap around the

entire length of its neck. It was actually smaller than the bottle that contained Doctor Mo's medicine. The bottle had a shiny green luster and was engraved with a dark green leaf pattern that seemed almost alive. When Han Li felt the contours of the designs on the surface of the bottle, it was almost as if there were actual leaves embedded onto the bottle itself.

Weighing the bottle in his hand, Han Li had no idea what type of metal was used to make this bottle, or if it was even porcelain. The bottle didn't have a cold, metallic feeling to it, nor did it have the gloss of porcelain.

Han Li had observed the bottle for a good while, and the only thing he could be certain of was that he didn't know what material was used to make it. The shade of green seemed intrinsically part of the material itself, not a color that added after it was made.

Seeing how tightly the bottle was sealed, Han Li naturally became curious. Eyeing the bottle, he strongly desired to see whether or not there was something inside.

Once more using his strength, he tried to pry open the cap of the bottle.

One try, two tries, three tries...It was as if the cap of the bottle was melded into the neck. It was almost as if it was refusing to move.

Han Li was astounded; back when he first picked up the bottle, due to waves of pain assailing him, he couldn't use his full strength to open it so he didn't realize how stubborn the bottle was. But now that Han Li had finished tending to his foot and was using his full strength, he was surprised that he could still not pry open the bottle.

Han Li tried to twist the lid once more until his arms began to ache, but there was still no success, so he had no choice but to stop.

He stretched and loosened his arms, moving his wrist about. Just now, as he had expended a large amount of energy to open the bottle, and his efforts had strained his wrist.

Holding the bottle under his eye, he began to inspect it even closer. Unfortunately, there was no secret mechanism under the lid that would

allow him to easily open it.

This made Han Li frustrated. He wasn't able to open the bottle, so how would he know if there was something inside or not? If it was sealed up this tightly, then there was definitely something precious inside.

Han Li held the bottle tightly in his hand, looking at it with a vacant look. In the end, he had decided that he would let Zhang Tie, who was many times stronger than him, give it a try and see if he could open it. He knew that the current Zhang Tie could easily lift over 10 buckets of water up and down the mountains as if it was nothing. These days, it was Zhang Tie who refilled the water in the huge water tank every day.

After he decided, Han Li headed towards Zhang Tie's place, hoping that he would return soon.

Waiting for someone was truly unpleasant; Han Li felt that time was passing by extremely slowly. Finally, after waiting for a long time, a creaking sound was heard as Zhang Tie pushed open the door.

Looking up, Han Li saw that Zhang Tie was wearing only a thin piece of clothing. His entire body was steaming as he perspired freely. Han Li knew that this was the result of his cultivation, so he didn't find it strange.

Seeing as Han Li was already in his house waiting for him, Zhang Tie was stunned. But before Zhang Tie could say anything, Han Li impatiently thrust the bottle towards him.

"Brother Zhang, please lend me your assistance and help me open this bottle."

"Where did you find this? It looks rather nice!" Zhang Tie remarked as he took the bottle.

"Zi! Zi! Zi!" [TL Note: Sound of twisting bottle]

"Ai! This bottle is so tightly sealed. It's so hard to pry it open! What was used to make this?" Zhang Tie cut straight to the chase: he wasn't able to open the bottle either.

“Gah! I can’t do it; this bottle won’t open! Why don’t you find a senior disciple to help you?” Zhang Tie shook his head apologetically and handed the bottle back to Han Li along with the suggestion.

“Even you can’t open this?” Han Li was getting more anxious and couldn’t help but pace around the room.

“Ai! What happened to your leg?” Zhang Tie inquired as he noticed Han Li’s foot.

“It’s nothing; I kicked a rock on the road.” Han Li didn’t know why but he didn’t want to tell Zhang Tie about his surprise encounter with the bottle just yet. Right now, he wanted to keep the bottle his own personal secret.

Han Li was feeling very disappointed in his heart. He didn’t want to sit around and chat with Zhang Tie at the moment, and after briefly asking about how his cultivation was progressing, Han Li immediately left the room and returned back to his own place to think of a way to resolve his personal problem.

Returning back to his room, Han Li put the bottle on the table and stared intensely at it. At the same time, his mind was trying to think of solutions to open the mysterious bottle.

Chapter 12: Breaking the Bottle

“Peng!”

Han Li tightly grasped the bottle with his hands, and, with anger in his eyes, used his entire strength to smash the bottle against the table.

“If I can’t use my own body’s strength, then I shall use other means to break it open,” decided Han Li after thinking of numerous ways to open the vexating bottle.

Han Li had long since figured out that using brute strength and violence was not a solution.

This type of method, although simplistic and crude, was usually the most effective.

But the moment he thought of that beautiful bottle with its mysterious and intricate designs being smashed into smithereens, Han Li could feel a dull ache in his heart pulling him back, causing him to be extremely unwilling to let go of such a beautiful treasure. If there were any other methods to open the mysterious bottle, Han Li would choose those instead of using brute force.

If he asked the other senior disciples for help, they might be able to open it, but Han Li had unknowingly started to treat the mysterious bottle as a treasured item and was extremely reluctant to let others know of its existence.

The current Han Li was almost driven to insanity by his curiosity regarding the mysterious bottle. Although he knew that it might just be an empty bottle, he was still willing to bet that the bottle was protecting something precious!

The more he was unable to open the bottle, the more his curiosity grew.

If he couldn’t solve the mystery inside the bottle, then he would never be able to sleep well at night.

After he decided on his course of action, Han Li stealthily sneaked in a tool shed, selected a small iron hammer from the multitude of tools lying

about there, and brought the hammer back to his residence.

(TL: I know this might be confusing. Wielding a hammer requires body strength and Han Li previously said he wasn't going to rely on his body's strength. However, wielding a tool is viewed differently from using one's own strength because it adds a certain mechanical advantage that can accomplish what the body is unable to do)

Back in his house, Han Li pried half a brick from a corner in his room, and placed the bottle on top of the brick.

Han Li raised the hammer with his right hand, and swiftly smashed down onto the bottle's body!

"Peng!"

Afraid of using too much strength and accidentally smashing whatever was inside, Han Li used only a fraction of his strength in order to test the bottle's hardness.

Only after inspecting the bottle and finding that it was undamaged did Han Li relax. He started increasing the amount of strength he used in each strike.

"Peng!" 50% strength.

"Peng!" 70% strength.

"Peng!" 100% strength.

"Peng!" 120% strength.

Han Li exerted more and more of his strength into each hammer blow. As the motions of his arms got more and more frantic, the speed of the blows grew faster and faster. Even after he had cracked the brick underneath, the bottle laid there innocently without a single scratch on its surface.

Han Li was dumbstruck, unable to comprehend the hardness of the bottle. Using his hands to feel its surface, there were no traces of damage. That lustery green surface, remained unblemished without any signs of Han Li's furious attempts.

This was completely beyond Han Li's expectations --"

Han Li was absolutely certain now that this bottle was made from an unusual material. There was a 90% possibility that this item was lost by someone of a high status. The owner may have already sent people to comb the mountainside in search for this mysterious object. If Han Li wanted to keep it, he had to be sure to hide it in an extremely secretive location and not let others know of its existence.

In his heart, Han Li followed the philosophy of "finders, keepers, losers, weepers." As long as one did not obtain the item by stealing or robbing, to Han Li, the item obtained was his by right. If it was some ordinary item, Han Li might have been willing to return it back to the owner, but this mysterious bottle? Not a chance! Looking at the bottle, he surmised that this item had most likely been misplaced by either some rich kid from a big family or someone with a high status. Sadly, Han Li did not have any good impression of people from both of these categories.

Since childhood, Han Li was from an extremely poor family. Despite of working very hard and living like dogs, they were often unable to afford to have a full meal. In the Seven Mysteries Sect, there were two types of person. The first type were those who threw their money about, wasting it on decadent luxury. They treated money as if it were water, spending it freely and without concern. Every time Han Li saw this, an uncomfortable feeling of rage would rise in his heart. The second type of people were those who looked down on the disciples who were born in rural villages. They would often abuse the less fortunate with scathing words and malicious actions. If there so happened to be any conflict between them and the villagers, however small the conflict was, the second type of person would usually form into groups and beat up the poorer kids. Han Li himself had his fair share of abuse. He had been beaten up by the rich kids until his face was swollen and he was unable to get up from bed. Han Li had to rest for a few weeks in order to fully recover.

As for those within the sect that possessed both money and status, Han Li also did not have good impressions of them. A good example was Protector Wang. Despite of accepting his Third Uncle's bribes, Protector

Wang did nothing to aid Han Li when he was taking the test. Instead, Protector Wang had been biased towards Wu Yan. Despite the fact that Han Li did not have the chance to see many of the grand figures residing in the sect, their image had long been tarnished by the actions of Protector Wang.

Whenever these two types of people lost their belongings, Han Li had no intentions of returning the items. He would even prank them by hiding the items in obscure locations.

After thinking of this, Han Li decided to remove the pouch which always hung upon his neck. His mother had personally sewn the pouch out of water-resistant leather. Inside the pouch was a good luck charm made from the tooth of a wild boar. His mother hoped this would protect him from danger and illnesses.

Han Li open his pouch, and hid the mysterious bottle alongside his good luck charm. He then swiftly sealed the pouch and replace it around his neck.

After doing so, he surveyed his surroundings; luckily, there was no one who had seen him or the mysterious bottle.

After taking so many precautions, Han Li felt more secure and threw away all of his concerns that the owner would discover the object and take it from him.

Han Li stealthily replaced the hammer in the tool shed and walked nonchalantly back around the God Hand Valley. As he limped back to his residence, the night was approaching.

Chapter 13: Strange Phenomenons

Because Han Li's leg was injured, Zhang Tie personally delivered the food to Han Li's house and accompanied him for dinner.

Looking at the clumsy Zhang Tie in his house, moving the chairs and setting the table, Han Li could help but find it funny. Zhang Tie's care caused traces of warmth to enter his heart.

After the table was set, both of them joked around as they ate, pushing food in their mouths while asking about their individual cultivation progress.

The moment Han Li brought up the Way of the Armoured Elephant, Zhang Tie sighed dejectedly.

Currently, Zhang Tie had only managed to cultivate the martial skill to its first stage but was already half tortured to death by the immense pain. He had to soak himself in foul-smelling herbal baths every night as well as suffer beatings from Doctor Mo designed to toughen his body and strengthen his bones.

This method of boorish cultivation had caused Zhang Tie many sleepless nights. Because his entire body was swollen from the beatings, the moment his skin touched his bed, he would grit his teeth in pain.

To him, cultivating the Way of the Elephant was nothing but a nightmare.

With regards to Han Li's cultivation of the nameless oracular chant, Zhang Tie could not help but feel envy in his heart.

He felt that Han Li only needed to spend his time peacefully in mediation like a monk. Hearing Zhang Tie's emotions, Han Li had nothing to say in his defense. He was also aware that his cultivation was much easier when compared to Zhang Tie's arduous labor.

Han Li could somewhat understand Zhang Tie's fear towards the Way of the Armored Elephant." As he progressed through the nine stages of the Way of the Armored Elephant, he would have to bear

unimaginable pain.

Despite the difficulty, Zhang Tie had persisted, refusing to give up. Han Li could not help but admire and respect Zhang Tie for his unyielding personality.

If Han Li were in Zhang Tie's shoes, he would never have chosen to practice such a domineering skill. Even if the skill could turn him into a world-shaking expert overnight, he would still reject it.

The two of them had almost finished dinner as they were talking excitedly about martial arts. Once the meal was over, Zhang Tie cleared the bowls and bid his farewell. Before leaving, he still reminded Han Li to take care of his injured foot and to go to sleep early..

Standing at the door, Han Li watched as Zhang Tie left and quickly returned back to his house, closing all the windows except for a slight opening in the skylight to allow some air to flow through before taking out the mysterious bottle from his leather pouch.

Han Li was only a ten year old child with a short attention span. After studying the bottle for a short period of time, he quickly got bored. With his foot injury, Han Li also felt somewhat tired out by today's turn of events. Unknowingly, he fell asleep on his bed with his hand holding onto the bottle.

Time passed by. Just when Han Li was sleeping soundly, he suddenly felt an icy cool feeling flowing from his hand.

Han Li involuntarily shivered, and he forcefully opened his heavy eyelids, gazing at his hand in a daze.

"Oh!" He immediately sat up with his mouth open in shocked to such an extent that saliva dripped down from his gaping mouth. He no longer felt sleepy; instead, his attention was fixed on the strange sight in front of him.

Rays of white light could be seen beaming through the gap from the skylight. The beams concentrated around the bottle Han Li held in his hand, forming many rice-sized white dots of light on the surface of the

bottle. It gave the impression that the bottle was enveloped by the rays of white light.

The rays of light looked extremely gentle, not menacing at all, and that icy cool feeling originated precisely from the rays of light!

Han Li swallowed a big gulp of saliva, and finally turned his eyes away from the bottle. As if it burned his hand, he quickly threw the bottle to one side before scrambling to the other side of the room.

After a moment of vigilance, he realised that nothing was wrong and slowly inched towards the mysterious bottle.

The mysterious bottle enveloped by the white light, other than looking beautiful, seemed to possess an aura that was not of this world.

Han Li hesitated for awhile before using his finger to poke the bottle a few times. Seeing there was no reaction, he cautiously picked up the bottle again. Putting the bottle on the table, he laid on the nearby bed and closely examined this never-before-seen phenomenon.

Han Li focused his full attention on the mysterious bottle for about an hour and half without even blinking before he finally realised some of the secrets that the mysterious bottle was hiding.

The mysterious bottle was incessantly absorbing the rice-sized beads of white light surrounding it. No, not simply absorbing; it was as if the beads of white light had a will of their own and were fighting with each other in order to be the first to enter the bottle.

Han Li viewed this extremely bizarre event and used his fingertip to touch a bead of white light.

It felt icy cold! Other than this, there was nothing special about it.

Han Li inclined his head and looked upward.

The rays of white light were still beaming through the gap in the skylight as if they had no intention of stopping.

Han Li surveyed the interior of his room to make sure the doors and windows were all closed before inclining his head to look at the skylight

once more.

Han Li was suddenly hit by a thought. He lightly pushed open the door, popped his head out and peek at his surroundings.

Luckily, it was the middle of the night; other than insects, there was no one else.

Han Li returned back to his room, grabbing the bottle and putting it back inside the pouch before hurrying outside again.

He ran towards a remote location before stopping

Surveying all four directions and ensuring there was no one nearby, Han Li cautiously removed the bottle from his pouch and placing it gently on the ground.

While the mysterious bottle had been sealed in his pouch, the white rays of light had disappeared.

However, Han Li was not worried.

As he expected, after waiting for a while, rays of white light began congregating around the bottle from all four directions. This time round, the rays were much more dense than the rays produced in his house. They tightly enveloped the mysterious bottle in a shroud of white light, forming a ball of light the size of a human head.

Chapter 14: Mysterious Liquid

“Ah!” Han Li cried out with excitement and pumped his fist into the air.

By doing so, he revealed that he was indeed still a child.

His assumption seemed to be correct; when the bottle was in the dark room, the amount of light attracted to it was quite small. But when in an wide and open area, the amount of light attracted to it was far greater in quantity.

But what caused the light to gather? What use did they serve? Although he didn't know the answer, Han Li felt he was close to solving the riddle behind the mysterious bottle.

Han Li knew that he would soon unravel the secret of the mysterious bottle, which made him tremendously excited.

At dawn, the light that had gathered around the bottle slowly faded away

After making sure that there was no one near by observing his actions, Han Li returned his attention to the bottle's status.

Then, he bent down to pick the bottle and inspected it.

However, there seemed to be no difference since it was still impossible to open!

Han Li felt disappointed, but seeing how morning was arriving, he unwillingly put away the bottle and prepared to leave.

After all, he still wanted to return to the stone chamber to practice his cultivation.

For the next following nights at fixed intervals, the bottle would undergo the same experience. Countless specks of light would fly towards the bottle like moths to a flame, and no matter how big or small the specks of light was, they were greedily devoured by the bottle.

Initially, Han Li thought that the bottle would continue to undergo the same process for an unknown amount of time, but on the 8th day,

something unexpected happened.

Han Li went back to the remote place in the mountains and placed the bottle in its regular spot. The absorbance of the specks of light continued for half an hour when all of a sudden, the bottle stopped absorbing. The dark green designs on the bottle began to emit a green radiance as golden words manifested on surface of the bottle. The strange words on the bottle were imposing and firm, but the written strokes were unusual. The words seemed to belong to an ancient era, the characters flickering incessantly.

But this weird occurrence had ended as suddenly as it began. Aside from the golden words that were now imprinted onto the bottle, everything else remained the same.

After seeing so many strange things happening with the bottle in the past few days, Han Li was no longer as surprised as he had been in the past. Even the appearance of the golden words did not surprised too much.

Casually grasping the bottle in his hand, he tried to open the bottle on a whim.

And much to his extreme surprise, the lid popped off with barely any effort.

No way! Han Li stared at the bottle in shock.

With next to no effort or thought, Han Li's problem regarding how to open the bottle had been suddenly resolved. How could it be so easy to open?!

Repeatedly looking down at the bottle to confirm that what he was looking at was not fake, he tried to calm his agitated heart before looking straight into the bottle.

Inside the bottle was a jade green drop of liquid no bigger than a soybean. As it flowed around inside the bottle, the entire inside of the bottle reflected a green luster

What was this drop of liquid?

Han Li was disappointed; he had put in so much effort only to be rewarded with some seemingly mundane liquid.

Disappointed, Han Li put the bottle back into his pouch before turning around and dejectedly returning to his room. His previous excitement had been thrown

to the farthest corners of the earth in a sudden rollercoaster of emotions.

Although he had finally opened the bottle, he was absolutely disappointed with the result.

Han Li was prepared to take his time to discover what secrets that drop of jade green liquid held. Perhaps in the future it would be able to give him an unexpected surprise!

Right now, what he wanted to do most was to go back and sleep. For the past few days, he had not been able to sleep properly, which even cut into his daytime cultivation, making his progress so inefficient to the point where even Doctor Mo had inquired him about it.

Ever since Han Li had become Doctor Mo's disciple after breaking through the first layer of the chant, he felt that there was no longer a need to practice the chant. Disappointed by the chant's effects on his body, or lack thereof, he was unwilling to continue relying on it to cultivate.

For that, Doctor Mo fiercely reprimanded him.

As a result, Han Li was unenthusiastic and without spirit every time he cultivated.

Seeing this, Doctor Mo became desperate and angry, beginning to doubt his choice in a disciple.

Thinking about his situation, Han Li couldn't help but feel wronged. But.. he was just not in the mood for cultivation.

But what Han Li couldn't imagine was that, after waking up on the second day, he was once again motivated and threw his entire body into

cultivating like a madman.

The reason for him to cultivate in such a manner was simply because of a single, simple statement Doctor Mo had made.

“For every single stage you improve with this oracular chant, I will increase the amount of silver issued to you by another fold.” Doctor Mo had seen the thirst Han Li had for money and figured out a way for Han Li to be enticed. This way, Han Li motivated would have enough motivation to cultivate.

For the next few days, Han Li dedicated himself to cultivation, hoping to break through to the second stage.

Everyday from morning to noon and from noon to night, he would enter the stone cultivation chamber and cultivate. Any thoughts about how repetitious, mundane, or boring this lifestyle was immediately got thrown out of Han Li's head.

For the sake of Han Li's cultivation, Doctor Mo had even temporarily sealed off the God Hand Valley. Even when he treated patients, he would treat them outside the valley for fear of disrupting Han Li.

Han Li was now so focused on breaking through that he even forgot about analysing the effects of the bottle's jade green liquid.

Autumn went by as winter came, then spring rolled in before summer arrived.

In a flash, four years had gone by.. Han Li was now 14 years old.

Over the years, he had grown up to be even an even more silent and strong-willed village boy. Based on his tanned appearance alone, he looked no different than any other villager. His looks did not warrant any attention; he was not extraordinarily handsome, and neither did he have a regal air around him like nobles did.

That was the result of living at the stone cultivation chamber everyday. He would travel back and from from there to his home. Occasionally, he would go to Doctor Mo's residence to learn about medicine and to read from Doctor Mo's collection of books. The entire valley was his world to

live in, and thanks to his hardwork, he had finally broken through to the third stage!

Chapter 15: Four years later

Doctor Mo was extremely satisfied with the amount of effort Han Li dedicated to his cultivation.

However, he still felt that Han Li's rate of progress at breaking through to the next stage in the oracular chant was too slow.

These past few years, the illness Doctor Mo was suffering from had been getting more serious. He would cough countless times a day, with the bouts of coughing getting more and more frequent and lasting longer and longer.

As the condition of his body got worst, Doctor Mo started to pay more attention to Han Li's cultivation. From his relentless urging, one could see the anxiety in his heart.

For some reason, Doctor Mo attached enormous importance to Han Li. Not only did he increased the payment in terms of silver, even Doctor Mo's gaze was filled with tender emotion akin to that of observing a rare treasure.

Despite this, Han Li, who had reached the third stage in the oracular chant, noticed an underlying truth with his extremely acute senses. Han Li inadvertently discovered that behind Doctor Mo's warm and friendly gaze hid a trace of coldness and extreme greed, which made Han Li feel uncomfortable

That gaze that Doctor Mo threw at him actually caused Han Li to be frightened from the tips of his hair all the way to the marrow in his bones. He felt that Doctor Mo saw him more as an object instead of as a living being.

This made Han Li felt puzzled. What could he possibly have that Doctor Mo desired?

"Of course, there was nothing I have that he would be interested in," Han Li assured himself after thinking deeply.

There were even times when Han Li thought that he was overly tired

from cultivating the nameless chant, but he would shake his head in shame. He could not help but blame himself; after all, berating Doctor Mo behind his back was an ungrateful act.

However, he did know the exact reason why, in the deepest recesses of his heart, he still held a feeling of caution whenever he interacted with Doctor Mo. As time passed, this feeling of caution got stronger and stronger.

Currently, there was a huge problem facing Han Li. He had already reached the bottleneck of the third stage, but Doctor Mo's stock of precious herbs had already ran dry.

Obviously, Han Li was not a genius by any means. If it was not for the assistance of the medicinal herbs, his cultivation progress would have long stagnated.

Every time he met Doctor Mo, Han Li could not help but to feel a sense of shame.

Doctor Mo had practically spent all of his fortune to painstakingly aid Han Li in his cultivation, creating favourable conditions for Han Li, and yet... Han Li was unable to satisfy his request.

This made Han Li extremely unwilling to meet Doctor Mo's gaze whenever there was an enquiry by Doctor Mo regarding his state of progress.

Strangely enough, for God knows what reason, the highly skilled Doctor Mo was unable to know Han Li's progress without being told by Han Li. Thus, he was kept in the dark regarding the problem of Han Li's bottleneck.

However, not long ago, the guilt in Han Li's heart caused him to seek out Doctor Mo and confess about the bottleneck he faced in his cultivation.

After Doctor Mo heard that in the past year, there had not been the slightest progress in Han Li's cultivation, his normally expressionless face became extremely unsightly.

To Han Li's surprise, Doctor Mo did not rebuke him. Instead, he told Han Li that he would be gone from the valley for a period of time to gather the necessary herbs and reminded Han Li to continue devoting his efforts into cultivating the oracular chant.

Two days later, Doctor Mo brought along a case filled with tools needed to extract herbs and left the Seven Mysteries Sect.

After he left, Han Li was all alone in the God Hand Valley.

As for his good friend, Zhang Tie, he had already cultivated to the third stage of the "Way of the Armored Elephant" two years ago and had disappeared without a trace. Zhang Tie only left a letter of farewell, stating that he wanted to explore Jiang Hu. This incident caused a great disturbance in the sect. After that, there were rumors that Zhang Tie's family was spared from punishment after Doctor Mo pleaded on their behalf. Han Li felt that the entire matter was extremely bizarre, and after thinking about it, he was sure that there was more than meets the eye regarding this matter. Regardless, Han Li held no position of importance in the sect; thus his words were ignored, and this matter had long since been swept under the rug. After contemplating, Han Li thought, "Could it be that Zhang Tie was afraid of the backlash caused by the fourth stage of his martial skill that he ran away?"

Putting his thoughts of Zhang Tie aside, Han Li cultivated for a few days inside the valley but was still unable to make the slightest bit of progress. Since he was a hot blooded male, he decided to explore the Celestial Rainbow Mountains instead of staying cooped up in the God Hand Valley.

As he walked along the mountain paths, the paths that he knew so well actually held a tinge of unfamiliarity; he could not help but feel slight traces of sadness in his heart.

This past few years, because of his cultivation, it was as if Han Li was staying in a prison, unable to take a single step outside the valley.

The disciples of the Seven Mysteries Sect should have already long forgotten his existence.

On the roads, Han Li met a few disciples that were under patrol duty.

From their perspective, this stranger wearing the robes of an Inner Disciple filled them with suspicion. It was only after much explanation that Han Li managed to convince them that he was indeed a disciple of the Seven Mysteries Sect..

To avoid any more situations like that, Han Li decided to traverse along the small trails that were separated from the main road.

As he expected, he met no other disciples, and this enable him to travel faster with no interruptions.

Looking at the beautiful scenery and listening to the birds chirping, Han Li felt that, for that moment, it was as if all that was troubling him had melted away.

Suddenly, the sound of weapon clashing rang out as the air erupted with a cacophony of cursing voices emitted from the ravine of a nearby mountain.

“What? There are so many people gathered in such a remote location?”

Great curiosity arose in Han Li’s heart, and no longer fearing the questions of other disciples, he followed the noises and came close to the source of the sound.

What a big crowd! Han Li stare mutely in shock.

The ravine, completely hidden by the forest, was a small area. Despite this, there was a total of a hundred people crowding together in the ravine! There were also people standing on the branches of giant trees.

Two groups of people were staring at each other, and a thick sense of enmity emanated from both groups.

The group of people standing on the left side consisted of a total of 11 or 12 people while the group on the right side consisted of 6 or 7 people.

Han Li discovered that these two groups were of similar age as him! All of them were about 15 – 20 years old.

A slight smile hung on his lips as he thought, “What a coincidence!”

From this group of people, Han Li could pinpoint a few familiar faces.

“Fang Yu Bao, Zhang Da Lu, Ma Yun, Sun Li Song...., Ai! Fatty Wang is even more obese than the last time I saw him! This person is... Metalhead Liu. Ze! Ze! (TL: sound of clicking one’s tongue) He was actually so tanned back then. To think that his skin was so fair and white now, has he became someone that lives on the earnings of a woman so he can sit and be lazy the whole day?” Han Li sniggered as he climbed onto the huge tree as he began to lose himself in his memories.

Chapter 16: Little Abacus

Down below, two barehanded youths were locked in close quarters combat. One was fat but held a steady composure and possessed herculean strength. This was Han Li's good friend, Fatty Wang. Fatty Wang's plump body boasted fists of mighty strength and a loud yell to accompany every punch. With each punch, a gust of wind followed. The other fighter was like a rat. He did not bother to block any of the punches thrown at him and instead chose to evade them. It appeared that he wanted fight a war of attrition, exhausting Fatty Wang before finishing him off.

Seeing how his good friend was in the battle, Han Li naturally hoped Fatty Wang would win.

After a while, Fatty Wang still showed no signs of slowing down. Although Han Li did not practice martial arts, his intuition told him that Fatty Wang would not lose.

He looked around in hopes of finding someone who could explain what was happening here.

Han Li saw a person sitting not too far away on a rock. It was a youth constantly gesturing while crying out, "Hit his head, kick his waist, ai ya! Almost! That's right, kick his butt, use all of your strength..."

This youth was beaming radiantly as he cheered.

It almost felt as if he was standing right next to Fatty Wang, giving words of encouragement as his personal coach.

Han Li concluded that this person was pretty interesting, so he slowly climbed down the tree to get to where he was.

"Senior, do you know the two who are fighting and why they're fighting?" Han Li asked politely.

"What do you mean 'do I know'? Is there anything that I, Little Abacus, don't know? Of course I know everything about the fight! Who are you? How come I've never seen you before? Did you just join the sect? No,

that's not right, there's still over half a year until the next disciple examination, so who are you then?" This person was very enthusiastic at first, but when he realized he had never seen Han Li before, his expression became serious and even a little suspicious.

"I am Han Li, a friend of Fatty Wang, who is fighting there," Han Li replied simply.

"Fatty Wang's friend? I know all of his friends, and you're not one of them!" The person became more and more wary.

"Oh, I've been in closed door training for the past few years. Not knowing who I am is not surprising," Han Li half lied.

"Is that right? You too joined the sect as a disciple 4 years ago? To think that would be something, that the omniscient me didn't know ." He looked at Han Li's clothes, appearing to believe in Han Li's word.

The person known as Little Abacus and Han Li talked about a few unrelated subjects until he finally answered Han Li's question.

"Junior Disciple, what you don't know is that this is all because of a woman. That is..." the self-proclaimed smartypants said as he began to explain in great detail. Indeed, he seemed to know most of the sect matters that were floating around.

It seemed that there were 2 people involved. One was called Wang Yang, who was Fatty Wang's cousin, and the other was Zhang Chang Gui. The two were both disciples of the Seven Mysteries Sect, but one was an Outer Sect Disciple while the other was an Inner Sect Disciple.

While these two had grown up in the same town, neither of them would ever spoke with each other. This all happened because of a girl. The girl was betrothed to Wang Yang from an early age, but one day, while traveling back home, the head of the Zhang family had caught a glimpse of her and decided to give her to Zhang Chang Gui. Using his money and influence, he had taken both her and her family, ignoring Wang Yang's engagement. This grievous news had dealt a heavy blow to Wang Yang as he had long since been infatuated with her. Knowing that there was no way he'd be able to oppose the Zhang family, he jumped to his death in

the river.

Even though it was a tragedy, his death should have ended the matter.

But who knew that his close cousin Fatty Wang, after learning what had happened, would refuse to let his cousin go unavenged? After confronting Zhang Chang Gui, the two vowed to duel, agreeing that the loser would be the winner's slave.

Zhang Chang Gui may have been arrogant, but he was not stupid. He understood that, in martial arts, he was inferior to Fatty Wang. He requested that he be allowed to bring friends who could help out and join in to fight multiple rounds. Fatty Wang readily agreed. (TL: is fatty wang stupid? =.=) Afterwards, Zhang Chang Gui used his money to look for disciples within the Outer Sect to help him. Although Fatty Wang was poor and had no money, he was a good friend to many disciples within the sect, and many of them had decided to come to his aid

As a result, many had come to show of their support, which led to a great amount of hostility on the verge of exploding.

Hearing this, Han Li had realized that this conflict had grown too serious to settle without any bloodshed.

Unexpectedly, a small spar had blown up into such an enormous affair.

"You are here to help Fatty Wang, right? If they don't abide by the rules, then we will move in and beat them until they wet themselves in fear. Let them know that we peasants are not easy to bully." The youth spoke without stopping for a single breath.

Han Li gave a bitter smile as he realized that he should not get involved. After all, picking a side would only serve to make enemies, and because of his few years of cultivation, his impulsiveness had long since been whittled away. Plus, Han Li had never learned any martial arts and wouldn't be able to beat even the weakest disciple. After watching the competition, it would be better for him to return back to the valley.

"Good!" Suddenly, the youth cried out loud.

Upon hearing the youth, Han Li turned his head back to look at the

fight. As it turns out, Fatty Wang's enemy slipped up and was struck in the forehead by a large fist, smacking him to the ground already unconscious.

Immediately, a part of the crowd cheered in support while the others had nasty looks on their faces.

Fatty Wang's face had a look of pride on it as he pumped his fist upward. Slapping his butt, he walked swaggeringly back towards his side, smug about his victory.

From Zhang Chang Gui's side came two people who took the fainted disciple away.

Then, each side produced one individual. One was carrying a saber while the other carried a sword.

(TL: In this novel, when we mention 'saber', we mean 刀 Dao, the Chinese Saber, a single edged sword. When we say 'sword', we mean 剑 Jian, the Chinese Sword, thin and double-edged.)

Each of them had a fiery look on their faces, but they didn't say a word. Holding their weapons up, they began to clash, the sound of ringing metal filling the air.

Chapter 17: Senior Disciple Li (1)

Their weapons could only be seen as flashing blurs as the saber and the sword clashed with no clear victor.

Han Li wasn't able to keep up with the fight at all, only understanding that the fight was very intense. The difficulty or effectiveness of their movements and which person had the advantage were far beyond his scope of knowledge.

"Junior apprentice brother Han, I don't know which sect master you've trained under, but I'm sure your martial arts has made massive improvements after training in isolation, right?" Little Abacus curiously asked.

Every Inner Disciple of the Seven Mysteries Sect, after two years of practicing their fundamentals in the Hundred Disciples Hall, would be separated and be apprenticed to a master to learn more profound martial arts. Only after they finish their apprenticeship would they be able to hold a permanent position within the sect.

In the case that a disciple displayed remarkable strength in the Disciple Examination, they wouldn't even need to practice fundamentals for two years. Instead, they would directly enter the Seven Supreme Division, where the Sect Leader or Vice Sect Leaders would personally impart some knowledge onto them, giving them a formidable advantage akin to a carp leaping over a dragon gate.

(TL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fish_in_Chinese_mythology)

Within those two years of practicing one's fundamentals, those with outstanding potential, would also be noticed by some elders and accepted as their personal disciple. Backed and taught by such a powerful figure, these disciples' prospects couldn't even be compared to those of other disciples.

After hearing that Han Li had only just come out of seclusion, Little Abacus was even more sure that he hadn't heard of this person before. He naturally assumed that Han Li was a prestigious Inner Disciple, so he had

been very respectful to him in hopes of gaining favor.

“A few years ago, an honored elder took me in as his disciple, but please understand, I cannot disclose just who this elder is.” Han Li knew what the other disciple was trying to do, so he had to maintain a matter-of-fact expression while also pretending to carry around an air of arrogance.

“Is that right? Senior Apprentice Brother Han is quite lucky then. Your position within the Inner Sect must be high and your potential unlimited. This Junior Disciple hopes that, in the future, Senior Disciple will lend a hand towards his juniors.” Little Abacus didn’t particularly care about why Han Li concealed the name of his master. Whichever honored elder he was, he was surely stronger than his own master, so Little Abacus’s tone had immediately changed.

“Senior Disciple Han, just one look at you and I know that you are definitely not someone ordinary and that you will be successful without any difficulties.” He continued to flatter Han Li.

“This person’s skin is so dark, and his face looks rather stupid as well. How could he be the disciple to an honored elder while I am so clever but haven’t been noticed by any elders yet?” Little Abacus secretly muttered to himself while maintaining a respectful expression.

Han Li had recognized the change in his speech as well. One second he was Junior Disciple Han, and the next he was Senior Disciple Han. This was far too funny for Han Li to bear.

However, Han Li didn’t look down on Little Abacus for that. Trying to gain favor with those higher than oneself was one’s natural instinct. Someone who wanted a better life first needed to know his or her place. The people who understood this were ones who were successful in life.

But what was most disappointing was that the words Han Li had just said were primarily true. Han Li could only be considered nothing more than smuggled goods when compared to those true personal disciples of honored elders. Any other disciple of the Seven Mysteries Sect could easily beat him. If he were to try to flaunt his status and be arrogant, the truth would be quickly revealed.

Han Li forced out a smile as he calmly listened to Little Abacus's flattery. It was almost as if he were at a dinner party.

"Senior Disciple Han must be strong in martial arts. If he were to enter the ring, he would definitely beat these fighters into sorry states, definitely..." Little Abacus continuously flattered Han Li while also watching the match.

"Ai! How strange, such a prestigious disciple should have formidable internal strength but why does he look utterly unimpressive? He looks scrawny and weak, and his eyes don't have the shine of those who had broken through their acupoints. No matter how closely I look, he is nothing but a normal kid that doesn't know any martial arts." Little Abacus became more and more bewildered.

"The outcome has been decided." Han Li's light voice had immediately broke Little Abacus from his pondering.

Surprised, Little Abacus swiftly look back at the ring.

As it turns out, the saber wielder had his weapon knocked to the side. One arm was limp, while the other clutched at a wound. His face was ashen, but he did not declare his surrender. This wasn't surprising, since the strength between the two disciples wasn't all that much different. If he hadn't slipped up just then, they would have been evenly matched.

When Little Abacus saw this, there was a look of disappointment on his face, and he said softly, "What a shame."

"What's wrong? What do you mean by 'shame'?" Han Li didn't see anything noteworthy, but it seemed that this was not the case for the youth next to him.

"If Fatty Wang's team had won this fight, then this would have been their 3rd victory, and their best-three-out-of-five contest would have ended. It's a shame that he couldn't end it here!"

"Oh!"

"But that doesn't matter. Right now, the remaining person on Wang Dapang's side is our strongest disciple in martial arts. He uses the

Lightning Fast Saber, which is incomparably fierce and able to smash through metal! Haha! To be able to witness Senior Disciple Li's strength firsthand, I didn't come here for nothing. No matter who appears on Zhang Chang Gui's side, our victory is assured." Little Abacus, who was just depressed about their loss, quickly became excited once more as he began to talk about this Senior Disciple Li.

"So this will be the final match?" Han Li asked. He wondered who this Senior Disciple Li was. It seemed he really knew nothing about the major figures in the sect.

At this moment, a grim figure came up to Fatty Wang's side. The youth was holding a long sabre as he walked up to the middle of the ring. Without saying a single word, he closed his eyes.

"Senior Disciple Li! Senior Disciple Li! Senior Disciple Li!"

Seeing this youth come up to the ring, everyone grew excited as they all began to call out his name. With each shout, they grew louder until they eventually began to shake the entire ring with the magnitude of their voices. At this moment, there wasn't one single person that was cheering for a specific side; there was only one unanimous cry for this youth.

Chapter 18: Senior Disciple Li (2)

Was this Senior Disciple Li very famous? What is his background? Han Li was extremely surprised by this Senior Disciple Li's popularity.

"You don't even know who is Senior Disciple Li?"

"Well, I was in seclusion for a few years."

"Oh yes, I had actually forgotten. My memory is really bad. How could there be any disciple in the Seven Mysteries Sect who don't know about Senior Disciple Li? It was this preconception that caused me to accidentally forgot about your seclusion." Little Abacus suddenly realised as he hurriedly apologised.

"Could you tell me more about this Senior Disciple Li?"

"Senior Disciple Han, of course I can! Well, every junior disciple within the sect knows the story of Senior Disciple Li." Little Abacus, seeing Senior Disciple Li's opponent hesitating, took this opportunity to explain the legend of Senior Disciple Li to Han Li.

"Senior Disciple Han, I don't like to boast, but the story of Senior Disciple Li is known to both the junior and senior disciples of the Seven Mysteries Sect.

After a short introduction, Little Abacus began to reveal the story of Senior Disciple Li, and the story was legendary indeed.

This Senior Disciple Li entered the sect about 4 years ago but was from a different batch than Han Li. He too failed the preliminary test and entered the sect as an Unofficial Disciple. But after half a year, not only did he achieve the best results out of all the Unofficial Disciples in his group, he also sparred with the other senior disciples. Defeating over 30 senior disciples single handedly and breaking many records, Senior Disciple Li had gained a lot of attention from the higher ups in the sect. After an intense inspection, everyone was shocked that the bones of Senior Disciple Li were extremely ordinary and even his potential was determined to be limited. This made all the higher ups disappointed, so

none of the higher ups accepted him as their personal disciple. After the 2 years of basic training, he was delegated as a disciple of a Protector and only after managing to learn the most basic of martial skills in the Seven Mysteries Sect. The Windstorm Saber Technique that he was proficient in was one of the most commonly taught martial skill in the Seven Mystery Sect.

If that were the end of his story, Senior Disciple Li could not be considered legendary but rather someone with a good beginning and a weak ending. But after a short while, relying solely on this seemingly common martial skill, the Windstorm Saber Technique, he swept across all of the disciples in that year's annual competition. Using just a single technique and ranked 16th, he became the cream of the crop within his generation, which garnered the attention of the higher ups once again.

In the subsequent yearly competitions, Senior Disciple Li was incomparably bold and powerful, sweeping across all of the competitors like a sharp sword. He obtained an astonishingly high rank, gaining pride and face for all the new disciples. In last year's annual competition, he actually was ranked 3rd! One must know that the disciples in the first 2 ranks had already been in the sect for over 10 years! These two disciples were members of an older generation, their age roughly 27 or 28, and they had a much greater internal strength compared to Senior Disciple Li. There were also many who believed that if Senior Disciple Li had the same level of internal strength as the 2 top ranked disciples, Senior Disciple Li would undoubtedly be ranked the 1st.

Precisely because of this, Senior Disciple Li captured the attention of the higher ups once again and was specially nominated to be sent outside of the sect to undergo training and help out with the Seven Mystery Sect's various external affairs. While disciples of the same generation were still undergoing training, Senior Disciple Li had long rendered meritorious service for the sake of the Seven Mystery Sect and had even been nicknamed "Tiger Li" in Jiang Hu. After which, he was allowed to enter the Seven Supreme Division and obtained the chance to practice higher grade martial arts.

Han Li could not help being moved. After he heard the story, if everything he heard was real, Senior Disciple Li was indeed extraordinary. Senior Disciple Li started as an Unofficial Disciple and yet he could achieve the results he had today, how admirable indeed!

On the side of Zhang Chang Gui, they reluctantly sent out someone out after a long period of discussion.

The disciple they sent out looked to be relatively strong, unsheathing a gleaming sword with the thickness of a finger from the scabbard that hung around his waist. The disciple holding the sword was certainly not a person with an ordinary background.

After Senior Disciple Li sensed that someone entered the ring, he slowly opened his eyes, which seemed to be filled with radiance.

Senior Disciple Li shouted out loud. His sudden shout, akin to a thunderclap, reverberated through the entire region, causing buzzing sounds in everyone's ear. His opponent was likewise affected by the shout and an expression of fear began to surface on his face.

As he shouted, Senior Disciple Li had already drawn his saber. With a flash of movement, one deceptive action released over tens of blade shadows, trapping his opponent in a encirclement of numerous blades.

However, Senior Disciple Li's opponent was quick witted and vigilant. Although he had panicked slightly, the movement of his sword were insidious and crafty, and he managed to parry all of the blade strikes with an impenetrable defense!

"Who is this person?" Han Li could not help but ask.

"He is the son of the fifth Elder, Zhao Zi Ling. The skill he executed was Willow Swordplay is extremely tough to fight against."

"How good is he compared to Senior Disciple Li?"

"Naturally, Senior Disciple Li is still stronger." Little Abacus said with pride glowing on his face.

"Hmm, why did Zhang Chang Gui not sent out a stronger expert

instead?”

“Hehe! Zhao Zi Ling was already the strongest among them. Among us, the junior disciples, who would be able to defeat Senior Disciple Li? No matter who they send, it is useless.” Little Abacus gloated with a hint of taking pleasure over their opponent’s misfortune.

Indeed, although Zhao Zhi Ling’s swordplay was not chaotic, he had lacked any killing intent. He was pressured almost to the point of defeat by Senior Disciple Li. Also, those with more experience could tell with a single glance that Zhao’s defeat was only a matter of time.

Han Li watched for a moment before another suspicion rose in his heart.

“There is one thing i still find strange. Why are all the disciples here of the younger generation? What about all our senior seniors? Even if the rules prohibit them from entering the fight, for the sake of excitement, there should still be one or two coming and to spectate. However, there isn’t even a single senior disciple. Why is that so?” Han Li candidly voiced out the suspicion in his heart.

Little Abacus, after hearing Han Li’s question, had a total change in his expression and had a bizarre look on his face as he gazed at Han Li. This made Han Li feel extremely puzzled. Could it be that he had asked a question that was considered taboo in the sect?

Chapter 19: Battle in Jiang Hu

“Senior Disciple Han, you are really deaf to the outside world. This was such a massive event in the sect and yet you didn’t know about this? Even though you were in seclusion, your master should have spoken of it to you.” Little Abacus’s tone seemed to get more and more suspicious.

After hearing the question, Han Li did not even bother to speak. Instead, he took out a medallion and passed it over for Little Abacus to inspect.

“Senior Disciple Han, what are you doing? When have I ever doubted you? How could I not believe you?! The moment I saw you, I realised that you looked familiar, I must have met you a long time ago, hehe!” Little Abacus quickly scanned the medallion, and upon finding out that Han Li was indeed the disciple of some Elder, he frantically laughed to defuse the tension.

“Now, can you tell me?” Han Li was still concerned about the question he asked earlier.

“Of course, there’s no problem.”

“Damn, this is terrible, I hope I didn’t offend this guy.” Little Abacus mumbled as his heart shuddered, then he told the whole truth of the matter to Han Li.

For the past few years, the Seven Mysteries Sect and the Feral Wolf Gang had more and more clashes. for the sake of the control of the nearby wealthy towns. In total, the two major powers had over 10 clashes, and they both suffered plenty of casualties. Trained as mounted bandits, the members of the Feral wolf Gang were extremely ferocious as if they were unafraid of death, and they would go berserk at the sight of blood. The disciples of the Seven Mysteries Sect despite having superior martial arts, did not possess the right kind of killing intent that was necessary, and when fighting the Feral Wolf Gang, they would always avoid causing too much damage. Thus, in the end, the Seven Mysteries Sect would suffer more casualties. After a few rounds of battle, the higher ups of Seven Mysteries Sect could not take this lying down and thus, they had

mobilized the majority of disciples within their sect to smash the Feral Wolf Gang's members into smithereens. There were two reasons why the Seven Mysteries Sect did so. First, the control of the towns within its territory was too valuable to be lost, and secondly, to have the disciples become used to bloodshed, allowing them to gain practical battle experience in Jiang Hu.

Even so, despite the Inner Disciples of the Seven Mysteries Sect holding the advantage during the last few battles, there had been too many casualties. Even some of the older seniors had failed to return to the sect alive. After Little Abacus said this, he could not help but sigh.

After that, the sect leaders changed the strategy by letting the Inner Disciples take care of some minor missions and gain experience elsewhere in Jiang Hu. After they were used to combat, they would come back and join the clash against the Feral Wolf Gang. By doing so, it effectively minimised the number of casualties. Now, after each Inner Disciple had two years of training in the sect, they would be sent down the mountain to take charge of some minor missions to gain experiences before they were tasked to fight against the Feral Wolf Gang.

(TL: Repetitive, I know)

And so, the older senior disciples had already been sent out of the mountain, leaving only a few defenders and the junior disciples who had not yet completed their training.

After listening, Han Li suddenly understood why there were differences on the mountain now compared to 4 years ago.

"Dang!" A sound rang out as a sword flew into the sky.

Zhao Zi Ling's left hand was pressing on a wound on his right hand, and as he retreated a few steps, his face turned pale while he breathed heavily.

Under Senior Disciple Li's ferocious saber techniques, Zhao Zi Ling had no time to retreat, and thus, he had no choice but to use the sword in his hand to block the attack. Because his internal strength was insufficient, the weapon he held had been flung into the air because of the clash.

(TL: In this novel, when we mention 'saber', we mean 刀 Dao, the Chinese Saber, a single edged sword. When we say 'sword', we mean 剑 Jian, the Chinese Sword, thin and double-edged.)

“Senior Disciple Li, you are formidable indeed. This junior brother admits his defeat.” Zhao Zi Ling forcefully smile as he bowed slightly.

Loud exclamations rang out among the spectators.

“Senior Disciple Li, what a graceful martial skill!”

“Senior Disciple Li, excellent saber techniques!”

“Senior Disciple Li, please me some guidance!”

Cries of admiration rang out for their idol, the sound reverberating through the entire region.

Senior Disciple Li kept the huge saber lifted in the air while his cheeks turned red. Initially, it seemed that he wanted to say something, but his expression suddenly changed as he furrowed his brows as if thinking of something.

Senior Disciple Li said coolly, “I still have urgent things to do. Good bye.”

Turning around, Senior Disciple Li relied on a movement technique to swiftly leave the area.

“Ze Ze! Not only is Senior Disciple Li proficient in the saber arts, his movement technique is superior as well!”

“Yup!”

“Yup!”

Words of praise began to ring out.

Han Li furrowed his brows. This Senior Disciple Li's martial arts were indeed not bad, but it seems that he liked to be in the limelight, just like a teenager.

After he reflected, Han Li could not help but smile bitterly. He himself was not any older than Senior Disciple Li, and yet, his thinking was so

overly matured, just like a old man's. It seems that after practicing the oracular chant, his mental state had matured at a faster rate when compared to his peers.

“Junior Brother, up to now, I still haven't learned your true name,” Han Li eyed Little Abacus nearby as he suddenly thought of the question.

“My name is Jin Dong Bao. However, Senior Disciple Han can just refer to me as Little Abacus.” Little Abacus was excited after Han Li asked for his name. He figured that he had gained the favor of Han Li and would be able to use him to back him in the future.

“Next time you are sick or injured, come look for me. I will treat you for free.” Han Li patted his shoulders, turned his body and walked back into the forest region.

He left behind a dumbstruck Dong Jin Bao, who was still pondering over what Han Li's words meant.

Chapter 20: Essence Extraction Pill

After leaving the mountain region, Han Li could still hear the voices discussing how to settle Fatty Wang and Zhang Chang Gui's dispute. Han Li decided not to concern himself about the matter.

Whenever he thought Little Abacus's dumbstruck expression, he could not help but laugh out loud. His small excursion outside the valley had indeed lifted his spirits, and he was no longer as depressed as before.

He ventured out of the forest and walk straight ahead. A small creek appeared at the end of the path.

Han Li inclined his head upwards and looked at the fiery hot sun before lowering his head to avoid the glare and to drink some water from the creek. He felt that taking a bath right now would not be a bad idea.

As he bent downwards, with both of his hands entering the cool creek water, a voice filled with pain sounded out and reached his ears.

Han Li was surprised. To think that there would people in such a remote region.

Following the sound of the voice, Han Li wandered upstream and found a person wearing a disciple's robe lying on the floor, his body convulsing while his limbs flailed about.

The moment Han Li saw the person, he knew that the disciple was suffering from an acute illness and if he didn't help now, there might be danger of death.

Han Li rushed over and took out a wooden box from his robes. From the wooden box, he drew out silver needles that seemed to reflected the light as he pierce them into the acupoints on the disciple's back.

After he was done with the acupoints on the disciple's back, he turned the body of the disciple around and began to work with the acupoints located on his chest.

When the disciple's body was turned, Han Li sucked in a breath. He was shocked beyond measure. This person... this person, who was flailing

about earlier, was none other than the Senior Disciple Li that participated in the battle earlier!

Stunned, Han Li could only gaze at the facial features of Senior Disciple Li.

The current Senior Disciple Li did not have the air of a peerless expert at all. There was no heroic demeanor to be seen anywhere, only a cold face full of pain and suffering as his features contorted together and white foam leaked from his mouth. It was obvious that Senior Disciple Li from suffering from too much pain to bare, and he was almost to the point of being unconscious.

Han Li regained his calm as he muttered to himself. Akin to flowing water, the silver needle in Han Li's hand began to prick the acupoints on Senior Disciple Li's body continuously over 10 times. At the final prick, Han Li wiped the sweat that had formed on his forehead and released a breath. The usage of the silver needle and strength needed to pierce each acupoint exhausted a huge amount of energy from him.

After Senior Disciple Li's body was riddled with silver needles, he finally woke up and regained consciousness.

"You are..." Senior Disciple Li tried to say something, but he didn't have enough strength, so he could not say more than a few words.

"I'm from the God Hand Valley. Save your breath and slowly recover your strength. I can only remind you that your illness is very strange. In my estimation, only my teacher Doctor Mo would be able to save you. But sadly, he is currently away from the mountain." Han Li took the pulse of Senior Disciple Li as he furrowed his brows in thought.

"The... Medci..ne..is..at.." Senior Disciple Li's face paled as his lips shivered, lifting his arms to gesture at something, but he was unsuccessful.

"You have medicine to cure the illness in your body?:" Han Li roughly understood his meaning, and he questioned Senior Disciple Li.

"Ye....s" Senior Disciple Li saw that Han Li understood his meaning,

relaxed his features and nodded his head.

Han Li was no longer polite as he searched Senior Disciple Li's body for the antidote. He found many useless stuff, and amongst them, there was a small white jade bottle which he took out. This bottle was made of expensive material and was also tightly sealed. He guess this was what Senior Disciple Li was looking for.

As he took the bottle and glanced at Senior Disciple Li, his guess turned out correct. Senior Disciple Li's expression was full of joy as he frantically blinked his eyes.

Han Li unsealed the bottle, and contrary to his expectations, there was no fragrance of herbal components drifting out, but rather extremely pungent smell.

The moment Han Li smelled the pungent smell, his expression turned nasty as he cautiously took out a pink colour pill out from the bottle. This pill was extremely beautiful to behold, yet the pungent smell that was emitted from the pill caused people to have difficulty breathing.

"Is this a medicinal pill?" Han Li regained his calm face.

Senior Disciple Li was still unable to speak, but he blinked his eyes to convey to Han Li that this was the right pill.

"This Essence Extraction Pill was created from orchids, crabtailed flower, 100-year old egg of blue ant... as well as 23 other rarely seen ingredients. After the pill is concocted, it takes on a pinkish hue and emits a pungent smell. Ingesting it could unlock all of the potential of the human body, consuming the lifeforce in exchange. Am i right?"

Han Li coldly glanced at Senior Disciple Li as he listed the pill's descriptions word by word with an unmistakable tone in his voice.

The moment Senior Disciple Li heard Han Li words, his face paled as if devoid of blood, and a frantic expression appeared on his face.

"If you ingest this medicine, you would need to repeatedly ingest it after a certain period of time in addition to suffering the excruciating pain. If you refuse to ingest the second pill after eating the first, in the best

scenario, you would be paralysed and in the worse scenario, you could even die! From the first time you ingested this pill, fate has already decreed that you would be dead in less than 10 years as the pill forcefully unleashes your potential at the expense of burning your life force,” Han Li said without stopping.

“Don’t you try to lie to me that this is not the Essence Extraction Pill.” Han Li said.

After hearing what Han Li had said, an expression of hopelessness appeared on Senior Disciple Li’s face while an indescribable shock appeared in his eyes.

“Are you shocked because this particular medicine is very rare, and yet I know what it is?” Han Li could tell what Senior Disciple Li was thinking.

“The answer is simply. I, too, have eaten a pill like this.”

Han Li’s words broke the tension as he continued to shock Senior Disciple Li. After a while, Senior Disciple Li had an expression of disbelief.

“The way I ate the pill was different was different from how you ate it. I only ate a total of 1 pill, but I separated the pill into 10 portions, which I slowly ingesting over a long period of time. The small amount of drug I consumed was not able to do any harm to my body. Because this particular pill and the smell it emitted was too obvious, I had a very strong impression of this pill, so I easily recognized yours. I had always thought that other than me, there would not be a second person to ingest this type of pill, but who would have thought, my fellow disciple had consumed the pill as well.”

After saying this, Han Li gaze contained a hint of admiration as well as pity for Senior Disciple Li.

Unwilling to see the pitiful gaze fixed on him, Senior Disciple Li closed his eyes. However, his heartbeat was erratic and his mind was in chaos.

“You should have have consumed these pills for a few years already. If you refrain from consuming it now, I could beseech Doctor Mo to concoct

an antidote for you. Although the medicine cannot recover the life force you lost, it should still be able to grant you 20-30 years worth of life. But sadly, your martial skills would be lost forever. If you continue ingesting this pill, I can deduce from the backlash that happened earlier that you would have at most 5-6 years worth of life left, but obviously, your martial arts would only get better and better, even stronger than the might you displayed today. Since you dared to eat such a pill, this tells me that you are a person with an iron will. Since only you can decide your own fate, do you want to throw away this medicine or keep relying on it?"

Chapter 21: Painkilling Medicine

Senior Disciple Li's eyelids lightly shuddered as he pondered intensely, trying to decide which was the better path for him.

After a short moment, his tightly closed eyes snapped open as he stared intently at the pill in Han Li's hand with a feverish gaze.

Han Li did not say anything more and inserted the pill into Senior Disciple Li's mouth. The white foam around his mouth did nothing to stop him from swallowing the pill, and after it was fully ingested, Han Li slowly retracted all of the silver needles from Senior Disciple Li's body.

After the retrieval of all the silver needles, the Essence Extraction Pill began to take effect. Senior Disciple Li's pale face started to take on a reddish hue. At this moment, his body started to convulse again and his limbs started to shiver as a low drone issued from his throat.

Senior Disciple Li did not want to be a laughing stock in front of Han Li, so he tried unsuccessfully to suppress his pain-filled voice.

The low drone involuntarily got louder and louder as the shivers got more intense. It was only after a long period of time that the droning began to slowly subside.

Finally, Senior Disciple Li recovered as his face returned to its normal, pale colour, and his body stopped convulsing. This signalled that he successfully endured the last of the backlashes from consuming the Essence Extraction Pill.

Senior Disciple Li straightened his body, crossed his legs, and close his eyes in order to enter mediation, attempting to circulate his Qi to heal his injuries. Han Li found a clean, large rock nearby and sat down on it, watching Senior Disciple Li.

After the time it takes to cook a bowl of rice, the Senior Disciple Li, who was in a state of meditation, abruptly wrenched open his eyes and drew his saber in a flash, placing the shining blade on Han Li's neck.

"Give me a reason not to kill you!" Senior Disciple Li's eyes were full of

coldness and filled with killing intent.

“I just saved your life. Is that not a good enough reason?” Han Li stated calmly with no change to his expression except for the twitching of his brows. If one did not study Han Li’s face intently, they would not have seen it.

Senior Disciple Li’s face slightly softened, but his eyes were still filled with killing intent as he stared at Han Li.

“Before I made the decision to save you, I already guessed that you might kill me to protect your secret, but I didn’t think that your action would be so fast.” Han Li bitterly laughed as his face was filled with self-mockery.

“Ke! Despite knowing that saving you would bring calamity upon myself, I, a student of medical arts, couldn’t simply sit by and watch you die.” Han Li sighed.

As Senior Disciple Li heard his words, his face took on a somewhat embarrassed expression, and he shifted the saber from Han Li’s neck a little but did not fully remove the blade.

Han Li secretly let out a breath of relief, and he continued his speech more determinedly.

“You have no need to worry that I would divulge your secret. One look at my face and you would know that I’m not one to gossip, if you are still worried, I could swear a binding oath. You should be able to tell that I’m not skilled in martial arts, so if you discovered that I broke my vow, you could easily kill me,” Han Li calmly suggested.

“Okay, swear a binding oath then.” Senior Disciple Li said straightforwardly.

It was only now that Han Li relaxed. Before he saved Senior Disciple Li, he could infer that Senior Disciple Li was not one to forget kindness, but he was not 100% sure of his assessment. If he was wrong and Senior Disciple Li was a person that returned kindness with viciousness, he would have nothing left in his defense but to use his secret life-saving

method.

Knowing that he would not have to use it, Han Li stealthily retracted his hand from within his robes.

After Han Li swore a binding oath, Senior Disciple Li finally retracted the saber and returned it to its sheath.

Han Li slightly felt a slight trace of blood on his throat, caused by the keen edge of the saber. It was sticky to the touch, and as Han Li heartbeat returned to normal, he could feel cold sweat trickling down his back.

“What a close call! My evaluation prior to saving Senior Disciple Li was not comprehensive enough. I’m determined to learn from this mistake and to prevent my life from being in the control of someone else’s hands ever again.” He still had some fear lingering from this event.

“If there’s no guarantee of my safety, I will definitely not save others in the future.” Han Li decided immediately.

This was the first time Han Li had saved someone, but the experience left him with a bad taste in his mouth. This event only helped to reinforce that the world was full of unexpected turnout, and the last vestige of kindness in him was slowly being discarded away. Even though he had not turned evil, he was far from being a saint.

“You have saved my life and agreed to keep the matter a secret. I, Li Feiyu, owe you a big favor henceforth. As long as I’m still alive, no matter what you need help with, you can look for me. As long as I am able to accomplish the task, I will definitely help you.” As he reclaimed the items that Han Li ransacked through, Senior Disciple Li stated his vow straightforwardly, using his own name as a guarantee after he fully recovered from the pill’s backlash.

“I fear that I currently have nothing to trouble you with, but you should already have plenty of troubles, no?” Han Li had a slight smile on his face as he faced Senior Disciple Li with another question.

“How did you know?” Li Feiyu was startled and slightly lost his composure.

“Anyone would have easily guessed. You are just a normal disciple under a Protector, yet with your skills, you have surpassed disciples of the Vice Sect Leaders, Division Heads, and Elders. How could they possibly let you live peacefully!?” Han Li’s response was like a needle drawing blood; with a single prick, he went straight to the heart of the matter.

Senior Disciple Li’s expression was gloomy and overcast as he agreed in silence.

“Your troubles are your own, I have no wish to interfere and cannot interfere even if I wanted to, but, for the excruciating backlash from consuming the Essence Extracting Pill, I could help you lessen the pain.”

“Is this true?” Li Feiyu suddenly snapped to attention as his previous gloomy expression was replaced with anticipation and excitement. He was giddy since the backlash of the Essence Extraction Pill was extremely torturous.

“Why would I lie to you when there is nothing beneficial for me to gain by doing so?” Han Li glanced at Senior Disciple Li. He had already concocted a remedy that would greatly lessen the pain felt by others, a medicine that he researched in his spare time for Zhang Tie. It was extremely effective, greatly cutting off the nerve’s ability from to feel pain.

“This is truly excellent! Excellent!” Li Feiyu clasped his hands as he looked at Han Li with wonder and excitement.

“Why are you looking at me with such an expression? I do not have the medicine on me right now. I need to return to God Hand Valley before I can concoct it for you.”

After Li Feiyu heard what Han Li said, he had a slightly embarrassed look on his face. He had just threatened to kill Han Li and now, he was requesting his help.

“Tomorrow at noon, wait for me at the entrance of the God Hand Valley. I will hand you the remedy in that location, but since Doctor Mo is currently away, I can’t allow anyone to simply enter the God Hand Valley,” Han Li explained.

“Very well, I shall be there on time. Thank you, my dear brother.” Scared that Han Li would change his mind, Li Feiyu quickly responded with his confirmation.

“My name is Han Li, the personal disciple of Doctor Mo. Your cultivation in martial arts is so high, you can just directly call me Junior Brother Han in the future.”

After Han Li heard the words “my dear brother” he couldn’t help but shiver and thus, quickly told Senior Disciple Li his name to prevent him from calling Han Li any more embarrassing titles.

Chapter 22: Qi Deviation

Looking at of Li Feiyu's back, which was gradually disappearing as he walked away, Han Li quietly stood where he was, lost in contemplation.

After they had agreed to meet at noon the next day, Senior Disciple Li took the initiative to bid Han Li goodbye, saying that he had to meditate to fully heal his injuries.

After they had spoken for a long time, Han Li did not ask Li Feiyu why he had consumed the pill. Han Li knew that even if he had asked, it would be useless because things that already happened could not be changed.

From his observations, Li Feiyu was willing to forsake his future, just for a short 10 years of fame and glory. This probably meant that he had some underlying reason, which left him with no choice but to do so. No one would willingly commit suicide, so if Han Li really did question Li Feiyu, it would be like rubbing salt on his wounds.

Obviously, what Han Li did was correct. Before Li Feiyu left, when he saw that Han Li did not question him about the reason why he was taking the Essence Extracting Pill, he was grateful for Han Li being considerate. Han Li knew that although Li Feiyu did not mention anything, he assumed that he owed Han Li a favor.

Han Li was prepared to fulfill his promise to Senior Disciple Li, so not only would he not spread the secret, he would also concoct the pain-relieving medicine for Senior Disciple Li.

The reason for him doing so was simple. Since Senior Disciple Li was not a vile person, nor did he really want to kill Han Li, Han Li thought that he might as well use this opportunity to increase the amount of favors that Senior Disciple Li owed him. So, in the future, Senior Disciple Li would find it hard to turn down his requests.

In the next few years, Li Feiyu's martial skills would only exponentially increased as the Essence Extraction Pill burnt his life force, so he would be of immeasurable help to Han Li in the future. Even if Han Li did not need this favor, it did not matter much. Being able to help a character like

Senior Disciple Li also caused Han Li to feel happy in his heart. Although Senior Disciple Li may not be a good person, Han Li knew that after the events that transpired today, Li Feiyu wouldn't jeopardize him.

Han Li ran the whole sequence of events that happened today through his mind again. It was only when he was certain that everything had been accounted for that he returned to God Hand Valley.

After he strolled back to the God Hand Valley in a relaxed manner, Han Li began preparations to concoct the pain-relieving medicine for Senior Disciple Li. It was relatively simple for Han Li to concoct this medicine, as he could find all the ingredients he needed in the nearby medicinal herb garden. The only thing that was slightly complex was the concocting process. One must give it their full attention; if not, the chance of failure would be high.

After a busy afternoon, Han Li concocted a year's supply of the pain-relieving medicine Senior Disciple Li needed. He did not produce more intentionally as he wanted Senior Disciple Li to seek him out after all of the medicine was consumed so that he could increase his importance in Senior Disciple Li's eyes. This way, Senior Disciple Li would not be able to easily forget his favor.

In the middle of the night, Han Li was suddenly struck by a sense of loneliness as he raised his head to gaze at the stars in the pitch black sky and begin reminiscing.

He was thinking of his family back in his village!

He had left the village 4 years ago, and ever since he arrived at the mountain, he had been assiduously cultivating the nameless oracular formula every day and had no time to visit his family. The only thing he did to lessen his heartache was to send taels of silver back every month, hoping that his family was living a better life. He deeply treasured the letters that his parents wrote, even though there wasn't much written in the letters other than telling him that everything was good in his family, his Second Brother had married, and things were getting better because of the silver he sent back. Reading these letters made Han Li feel much

better. However, over the years, Han Li felt that the tone of the letters was gradually becoming more and more polite, as if they were writing to a stranger! Initially, this caused fear to blossom in his heart, as he did not know what to do in this situation. However, as time passed, this feeling of fear gradually numbed as the image of his family in his mind gradually became blurred.

He reminisced about matters of the past, thinking back to that warm feeling of the time when he was still back in the village, when melancholy suddenly hit him. That warm feeling was very valuable to him as he knew that he would never be able to savour it again.

Han Li placed his hand on his chest, using his fingers to grip the good luck charm that was in the leather pouch hanging around his neck.

Whenever he was frustrated, he would only need to hold the good luck charm to calm himself down... But tonight, after holding it, his heart only got more and more flustered, and he was unable to calm down.

He was unable to control his emotions because there was depression in his heart, which in turn caused bizarre bodily reactions from Han Li. His blood started to surge as the Qi in his body ran rampant.

“Qi Deviation!” These two words appeared in his mind. Han Li stood up, and drew in a huge breath, forcibly suppressing his chaotic state as he told himself to calm down. Now that Doctor Mo was away, he could only depend on himself to solve this crisis.

He did not know why he was suffering from Qi Deviation, and his mind continued to ponder. Even though now was not the best time to question the reason, he still tried finding the root cause and cut the problem at its root as it was the best way to recover from Qi Deviation.

Han Li rotated his head as he surveyed his surroundings, but nothing seemed suspicious.

He touched his chin with his right hand and at the same time, his hand also knocked against something on his chest.

“Leather pouch, Good Luck Charm”, the names of these 2 items

appeared in his mind.

“Could it be the good luck charm that caused the reaction?” Han Li was not sure, but he had no time to hesitate now as the condition of his body was getting worse and there were signs that he would soon be unable to control the surging Qi.

Han Li tore the leather pouch off his neck decisively and flung it away from him.

“No, something is wrong, I feel even worse. The surge in my Qi and blood is getting more violent.”

Han Li forcefully suppressed the surging Qi as he stared at the leather pouch with his bloodshot eyes, hoping to find the reason why he had suffered more after he flung the pouch away.

Chapter 23: Tests

Maybe lady luck was smiling on him. Abruptly, a sudden thought flashed past his mind.

He quickly rushed towards the leather pouch which he had discarded and with a deft movement, took out the good luck charm that was hidden inside neatly and quickly.

The moment his palm brushed against the good luck charm, a refreshing feeling was emitted from the bottle and eventually calmed his heart. His previous frustrations and melancholy all disappeared without a trace, and his Qi and blood stopped surging, returning back to his normal state.

Currently, Han Li had no interest in discovering the root of the problem that occurred earlier. Holding the good luck charm in his palm, he brought it forward in front of his eyelids, pressing it against his face. Gently caressing it, Han Li focused all of his attention on the bottle.

After half a day, Han Li heaved a sigh of relief, diverting his attention away from the good luck charm.

Han Li didn't know that the phenomenon that happened to him earlier was not because of "Qi Deviation" but rather because he suffered from a "Heart Demon" that all cultivators would eventually face. Luckily, he discovered it in its early stages and fought it off by focusing on an object that was familiar to him. If he hadn't, the Heart Demon would have entered his soul and controlled his body from within, causing him to bleed to death from of the meridians. Of course, Han Li wouldn't learn about this until after he truly stepped on to the path of cultivation in the future.

Han Li circulated his Qi around his whole body and realise there was nothing abnormal. What made him gasp in astonishment was that instead of suffering injuries, his cultivation level had unknowingly increased by a great extent! Although he did not make a breakthrough from the 3rd stage to the 4th, but because of his struggle against the

Heart Demon, he had reached the peak of the 3rd stage earlier than expected and was only a hair length away from breaking through to the 4th!

Because of this unexpected stroke of luck, Han Li had a smile on his face. However, he had to forcefully suppress the agitation in his heart. He was afraid that his unstable emotions would lead to another attack by the Heart Demon. Han Li was uncertain whether he could survive it intact if another attack took place. He took the good luck charm that had saved his life and replaced it inside the leather pouch before hanging it on his neck.

“Yi!” Han Li realised that there was an object long forgotten by him inside the leather pouch. An object that had been left lying about in there for a few years – the mysterious bottle!

Han Li had completely forgotten about the mysterious bottle. The moment he saw it, he remembered the past events.

The current Han Li was an archive of knowledge and wisdom that far surpassed the Han Li from four years ago. In these 4 years, he had read all the books in Doctor Mo’s residence and gained much knowledge. He also cultivated the nameless oracular chant, which effectively strengthened his mind. Looking back at the disturbance to his Qi, he could effectively deduce that this mysterious bottle was a treasured item with effects that were far from ordinary.

What Han Li needed to do now was to delve into and unravel the secrets of the bottle and to see if it could be used to benefit himself. There was no way he would just leave it lying around in the leather pouch and waste such a mysterious object.

Han Li took out the bottle and inspected its entire surface as if he were trying to look for something that he had missed out on during his inspection 4 years ago.

But no matter how much he inspected, there were no new discoveries.

Han Li wasted no time and opened the cap of the bottle. Floating inside was the mysterious bottle was the jade green droplet of liquid that had manifested 4 years ago! It was no different than from when it first

appeared in the bottle..

However, Han Li was positive that the secret of the bottle lay in the jade green droplet of liquid. To test his theories, he would need to find some small animals to do some horrific experiments.

It was midnight, the sky pitch black outside. The darkness made it simply impractical for him to hunt for live animals. And after experiencing the attack of the heart demon earlier, Han Li was already somewhat exhausted. Even if he could catch a live animal, how would he be able to see if there were any changes to the test subject if it was pitch dark? Any actions Han Li could make would be a waste of effort.

After contemplating, Han Li decided rest and recover his energy before experimenting the next day. He told himself that there would be a big surprise waiting for him tomorrow, and with that thought, he drifted off to sleep.

The next morning, after washing himself, Han Li went to eat a hearty breakfast. After that, he immediately went to speak to the head of the kitchen of the Seven Mysteries Sect, procuring two lively grey hares for a few tales of silver before returning back to the valley.

After he returned to the valley, Han Li chose a more spacious location inside the herb garden and tied the rabbits to a stake, letting them stay outside in the blazing sun for quite a period of time.

After the rabbits were dizzy from the heat and were almost dying of thirst, Han Li took out the mysterious bottle and poured the mysterious jade green droplet of liquid into a bowl before diluting it with water.

The mysterious droplet of liquid was about the size of a bean, and easily dissolved in the water, causing the whole bowl of water to turn into a jade green color.

Han Li placed the bowl near the rabbits and waited for them to drink the water. Being out in the blazing sun for such a long period of time, the rabbits scampered up and drank the water in the bowl in big gulps. Han Li was unwilling to allow the rabbits to drink the entire bowl of diluted water, and after half of the water was gone, he removed the bowl from the

rabbits' reach.

After that, he stood to the side and observed, patiently waiting for any reactions from the rabbits.

After a short moment passed, about the time it takes for a stick of incense to burn, the rabbits started to frantically jump about, their actions becoming more and more agitated and ferocious. Their bodies began to undergo an astounding mutation. Their fur and skin started to protrude lumps the size of a chicken egg. The lumps multiplied until they covered the rabbits' bodies. From afar, Han Li felt that the rabbit looked quite comical. The lumps had caused the rabbits to grow bigger by a single size, swelling up until both of the rabbits grew to the size of watermelons.

Looking at the mutation of the rabbits, along with their tortured shrieks, Han Li felt a bit of fear in his heart.

What just happened before his eyes was completely outside of his expectations. If the mysterious liquid was a potent poison or a miraculous medicine to increase cultivation, he would still not be so shocked. He did not expect was that the rabbits would actually grow lumps all over their bodies and expand to such a size, becoming grotesque beyond belief.

Chapter 24: A Panicked Decision

Looking at the rabbits in front of him, he saw that they continued to grow larger and expand.

Han Li had at last realized that something was wrong. He suddenly remembered something. He looked at the porcelain bowl in his hand like a snake and threw it to the side by the medicine field. He then turned around and took to his heels, running straight away from the rabbits for more than ten meters before stopping.

Just as he thought of turning around, one after another, two sounds simultaneously exploded over. Han Li shuddered and turned his head for a look. As expected, each of the two rabbits had turned into a bloody carcass, exploding into several chunks. Flesh and blood was scattered, covering a patch of grass with a blanket of blood. Two pits appeared in the the places where the rabbits had been originally tethered to. Surrounding the pits were the rabbits' messy remains. Bloody chunks of meat sprinkled the ground. This was a spectacle too terrible to observe.

Han Li let out a breath and sat down on the ground. He feared that if he had not reacted quickly enough at that instance, he would've been caught in the explosion. Although he might not have been seriously injured, his whole body drenched in rabbits blood and dregs of meat would have not been a pleasant affair.

Waiting until after his heart calmed, Han Li stood up and walked next to the pits.

After seeing the mutilation at the site, he took a look at the shattered porcelain bowl by the medicine field and was dumbfounded.

Han Li originally believed that he would have discovered the green liquid to be some sort of panacea, but he did not expect it to be such a frightening thing. Poison was poison, but it made the rabbits die so tragically! No matter what he said to himself, he could not pass this off as a trick. It was far too frightening! Han Li was not unfamiliar with deadly poisons. Under Doctor Mo's several years of instruction, Han Li was

experienced with many poisons capable of delivering an instant death, but not none of them was capable of killing a man so terribly.

After a while, Han Li regained his composure. Keeping his head calm, he made plans to depart from the medicine field.

Because it was soon going to be noon, he had to finish mixing the secret medicine to give to Senior Disciple Li. As for everything here, he would deal with it once he finished delivering the medicine.

With these thoughts in mind, Han Li did not take another look at the scene of the explosion, leaving all these troubles behind for later, and returned to his residence. After resting for a moment, he brought the medicine to the entrance of God Hand's Valley.

Han Li was very punctual. He arrived at the entrance just as noon arrived. Li Feiyu seemed to have been anxiously waiting for him for a while now.

He alone waited at the valley's entrance. He wore a white embroidered gown. However, he carried along the longsword that had previously left Han Li a deep impression. Since Han Li had not arrived yet, Li Feiyu's face showed a sliver of worry, anxiously looking towards the direction of the valley.

As soon as he saw Han Li finally arrive, he put away his expression of anxiety. The corner of his mouth slightly rose, his face exposing a smile.

"Junior Disciple Han, you are truly quite punctual! You said noon, and you arrived right on time. I was waiting here for almost an hour," Li Feiyu said half jokingly, half complaining.

"I am quite embarrassed. Blending the medicine took too much time yesterday, so I didn't sleep until it was very late. In the morning, I woke a bit late. As soon as I finished taking care of a few matters at hand, it was almost noon already." Said Han Li. Half of what he said was true.

"Junior Disciple Han...medicine, the medicine, did you finish mixing it?" Because Senior Disciple Li was anxious and a little hurried, he had actually spoke with somewhat of a stutter.

Han Li did not directly answer Senior Disciple Li's question. He calmly smiled, slowly taking out a large medicine bag out from his bosom. With a swing of his arm, he threw the medicine over to Li Feiyu.

"Every time before you consume the Essence Extraction Pill, take the medicine by mixing a spoon of the medicinal powder with cooled boiled water, and it will alleviate all of your pain."

"Thank you, Junior Disciple Han! Thank you, Junior Disciple Han!" Senior Disciple Li was wild with joy. Even if it could only ease his pain, he would have regarded it as great news. The pain from taking the Essence Extraction Pill made it so that he would shiver even when it wasn't cold. He had tried many painkillers, but they all had no effect. Since Junior Disciple Han knew all of the characteristics of the Essence Extraction Pill and had taken it before, perhaps this medicine would actually be effective.

"Don't thank me yet. Wait until after the medicine works before thanking me. In addition, this is only a year's worth of medicine. I currently used up all of the medicinal ingredients I had available. I won't be able to make any more for you until I gather enough medicinal ingredients," Han Li spoke bluntly.

"No problem. Isn't this a year's worth? This is enough for the time being. Regardless of whether or not this medicine is effective, I, Li Feiyu appreciates Junior Disciple Han's kind intentions." Senior Disciple Li had at last acquired what he desired. His expression returned to normal and was no longer artificial. He very straightforwardly expressed a humble feeling of respect towards Han Li.

Han Li faintly smiled. Not saying anything else, he took the initiative to part ways with Senior Disciple Li.

With the secret medicine in Li Feiyu's hand, his head was filled with thoughts of quickly returning and testing the efficacy of the medicine. Seeing that Li Feiyu had no urge to bother Han Li any further, the two mutually took their leave.

After returning from the valley entrance, Han Li first went to clean up

the medicine fields. The rabbit remains, bloodied earth, and broken bowl shards were soon completely swept into a hole. Then, he endlessly covered the two earth pits by pushing it flat with dirt. Just like that, it appeared as if there were no difference in the landscape between its current state and its state before the experiment.

Satisfied, Han Li clapped his hands to get rid of any dust particles. He looked all over the place, checking if there was anywhere he had overlooked.

When his eyes fell onto where the porcelain bowl had shattered, he could not help but mutter to himself.

He remembered very clearly that when he threw away the bowl, the diluted water within had spilled all over a small portion of the medicine field, landing on several medicinal herbs. He couldn't help but be somewhat hesitant since he didn't know whether these medicinal herbs would become poisonous after absorbing the water. Also, if someone were to eat these poisonous herbs, would they also experience the same horrible death as the rabbits? Should Han Li immediately destroy these poisonous plants? This chain of questions abruptly rose in Han Li's mind.

Han Li had pondered for half a day, unable to come to a decision. After examining the plants once more, he decided to only do another small experiment. If in the following days, the medicinal herbs really became poisonous, it still wouldn't be too late for him to destroy them.

After deciding, he looked around to see if there was nothing else he could do and went back to the stone room to practice. He hoped that he would be capable of breaking through and continue advancing his foundation.

Han Li currently no longer cared about the chant's specific usefulness. His cultivation of this chant had already become instinctive. If he did not cultivate it, Han Li wouldn't know what else he he could do in the mountain valley. Stubbornly cultivating this chant to a greater layer of cultivation had already become his current life's entire goal.

After an afternoon absorbed in cultivation, Han Li dispiritedly

discovered that he truly was not a genius. Although he felt the distance from the fourth layer could be pierced through by a finger, he couldn't advance an inch forward and had diligently cultivated the whole afternoon in vain.

It seemed he couldn't cultivate any further without the support of medicinal elixirs. Otherwise, it would be very likely that he would forever stay at the peak of third layer, unable to advance any further.

Han Li's mind began to hope expectantly that Doctor Mo would return a bit earlier and was lucky enough to have found enough medicinal ingredients to help Han Li break through his current predicament.

Chapter 25: Interference of Success

Another night passed. Han Li woke up at the crack of dawn and walked towards the medicine field. He wanted to observe whether or not the medicinal herbs had changed in any way.

Before he even entered the medical field, he could suddenly smell several rich medicinal fragrances.

Han Li was slightly dazed, but soon after, his mind stirred. "Perhaps it's....."

He couldn't help but increase his pace until he finally arrived in front of several medicinal herbs that were emitting an intense fragrance.

Were these the medical herbs from yesterday? Han Li didn't dare to trust his eyes. Using his hands, he fiercely slapped his slightly drowsy face until the pain made him stop.

"The leaves of this Yellow Dragon Grass has some hints of purple, the Bitter Lotus Flower actually has flowered nine petals, and the skin of this Forgotten Sorrow Fruit has turned black, ha ha! Ha ha!" Han Li couldn't hold back his laughter anymore. Usually, Han Li was calm and composed, but this time, he couldn't help but laugh heartily while facing the sky.

"This time I came across a great fortune. These medicinal herbs only needed one night to develop properties that require two years of age. All of their appearances turned to that of herbs aged more than ten years. Seeing the color of the leaves, the shape of the fruit, and the petals' fragrance...there are all qualities that belong to rare herbs that have already matured for quite some time." Han Li carefully examined all of the medicinal herbs, confirming they were identical to those described in medicine books. They were truly rare medicinal ingredients that have been aged for a great length of time.

"If I can mature medicinal herbs with this method, how many rare medicinal ingredients will I have?! I can also sell the medicinal herbs that I don't use. If that happens, how much silver will I make...?" Han Li was unable to restrain his excitement and started to let his imagination run

wild.

Han Li's thoughts further developed and he became more elated. He felt that he had truly picked up a treasure this time. All of a sudden, he somersaulted a few times. At this moment, he no longer maintained his normal calm appearance and expressed the excitement entirely like that of a normal 14-15 year old adolescent.

After a while, Han Li had finally calmed down, and his brain recovered its sharp wit. He began to think of how to deal with the somewhat difficult problems that brought by this huge meat pie that fell from the sky. (TL: "huge meat pie that fell from the sky" is a Chinese idiom for a fortuitous encounter)

First of all, there seemed to be no problems with the external appearance of these medicinal herbs. However, he still had not tested their medicinal properties. After all, they only became like this after they absorbed that strange liquid. Who knew whether their internal elements were abnormal? Yesterday, he had seen those rabbits' miserable demise with his own eyes. He still had to be careful.

Secondly, the green liquid within the small mysterious bottle had already been used up. He did not know whether the strange phenomenon that created the liquid drop would happen again. Perhaps it was an occurrence that only happened once. At night, he would go to confirm it himself.

If there were no problems with these two matters, then he truly needed to grasp the details and particulars of the drug-inducing ingredients in this manner. Then he would have complete control over this inconceivable method.

Han Li later pondered, arriving at the conclusion that if he were unable to resolve his few difficult problems that were earlier mentioned, this huge meat pie would only be a passing flower lost in a fog.

After everything was taken into account, Han Li began experimenting.

He first went to the large kitchen outside of the valley and asked the manager for another pair of grey haired rabbits. Han Li's actions made

the kitchen manager both happy and somewhat puzzled. Why does this youngster keep on buying live rabbits? Could it be he wants to butcher them himself and practice his culinary skills?

Han Li didn't care about what others thought of him. He didn't keep the rabbits at the medicine fields like before; instead, he bound them to the gate of his room so that he could conveniently observe how they change at any time.

After that, he went to the medicine fields and carefully picked the matured medicinal herbs. He made quite a few rolls of bone and muscle enhancing medicines and mixed them into the rabbits' favorite foods. Everyday, he fed them three such meals to test whether these medicinal herbs were poisonous.

With this finished, Han Li anxiously waited for nightfall. He felt time pass very slowly. Later, the moment he had been expectantly waiting for had finally arrived

Just as the sky began to grow dark, Han Li ran out and took the small bottle from the back of his room and set it on the floor. He concentrated on the small bottle, anticipating its change.

As a quarter of an hour went by, the bottle showed no activity.

Then half an hour went by, but the bottle still didn't show any activity.

And three quarters of an hour.....

As time elapsed, Han Li's heart had sunk more and more. He had stayed awake until daybreak. The bottle, however, was still no different from before.

He was completely dispirited. Could it be that this bottle was truly usable only once? Or did he not do something correctly?

Han Li strengthened his spirit and looked at his surroundings.

"There are no suspicious areas apart from the somewhat black sky." Han Li said to himself.

He suddenly stopped, at a loss for words. He lifted his head and gazed at

the sky. The sky was black and cloudy; not a thing could be seen. "The sky is a bit dark..." At these words, Han Li suddenly understood

"Could it be that it's because the clouds are preventing any light from the moon or the stars from falling on the bottle?" Han Li recalled that the bottle's previous transformation occurred during a clear sky. There had been nothing in the sky sheltering the moons and the stars, but today, there was gloomy weather. The whole sky was covered with black clouds.

Han Li's hopes were raised but he saw the color of the sky turn a bit pale. He knew that a clear sky would not happen tonight. He put away the bottle and prepared to test it again once the sky was clear.

However, contrary to Han Li's expectations, the next half month had uninterrupted drizzling and persisted until now.

Han Li looked at the continuous waves of drizzle outside. His mind was gloomy, and he continued to grow more anxious as he waited for the weather to clear. It had continued to drizzle down constantly without end or even the slightest intention of stopping.

He turned around towards the interior of his room and looked at the two rabbits, which had escaped the rain. They had a healthy and lively appearance, making Han Li even more depressed. Ever since the rabbits ate their medicine-infused food, not only were there no problems, they were even more vigorous than before. In these past ten days, Han Li had carefully watched them everyday to confirm the rabbits had no symptoms of poisoning. Instead, because they ate the bone and muscle strengthening medicines, they became even more healthy.

Not only did this good result fail to make Han Li happy, it also made his mind somewhat worried about his losses and gains. He hadn't the slightest means to make himself calm. Whether or not the bottle could produce more green liquid had already become the key to all of his problems. In addition, the lingering, lousy weather made it so that he was unable to test his theory. How could this not make Han Li utterly depressed?

Chapter 26: Medicinal Student

Just as Han Li became convinced that the rain would be endless, the sun finally rose into the sky and cleared away the clouds.

Han Li had already discovered the secret of the bottle half a month ago, and thus he was naturally impatient. On that clear night sky, Han Li saw once more the miracle from 4 years ago. Little by little, small orbs of light encircled the bottle before merging into one big sphere.

Upon seeing this miracle once more, Han Li raised his head excitedly. It seemed like the bottle was usable more than one just time. It could repeatedly regenerate the droplet of mysterious liquid as long as there was moonlight!

After another 7 days of waiting, the mysterious droplet of liquid finally formed. When Han Li saw the contents of the bottle, he was tremendously happy and excited. Now that he knew that he had a steady stream of precious herbs, he would no longer have to worry about insufficient resources.

It was important to know that the degree of how precious an ingredient was determined by its age. The older a medicinal herb was, the more precious it would be, and obviously, the medicinal effect would be much stronger. At the same time, an ingredient that was more precious would naturally be harder to find. Some ingredients could only be found in the depths of the forest or hanging from sheer cliffs. For those who didn't risk their lives, there was no way that they would be able to find precious ingredients.

Although there were several pharmacies that specialized in cultivating these rare herbs, these herbs were generally harvested so quickly in order to satisfy the large demand that they never got a chance to grow very large. For that reason, most weren't stupid enough to try and cultivate herbs for a long period of time and instead chose to harvest them as soon as possible.

Only the wealthy families could afford to grow and cultivate rare herbs

for stockpiling in the case of a crisis. Since the herbs were not only rare strands but also planted for a long time, their effectiveness was many times greater than that of common herbs. There wasn't a need for a specialist to cultivate the plants either! Not only did these families pass on their money from generation to generation, the herbs they had spent so much time on would be passed down as well. As a result, time was not an issue for these families. For centuries, these herbs would be cultivated in this way. In the case of both money and rare herbs, common people had no access to such a stockpile.

Occasionally, rare ingredients would appear briefly on the market, only to be purchased by the richer families. This slowly increased the prices of herbs and ingredients to the point that some of the herbs had been labeled as priceless.

Han Li hadn't been too optimistic about Elder Mo's ability to procure the precious herbs needed for his cultivation. But now, there was no need for him to worry. With this mysterious bottle, he would be able to create many ingredients in a short amount of time.

With a strange feeling in his heart, Han Li had been experimenting with the mysterious droplet of liquid on herbal ingredients for the past 10 days.

One time, he diluted the green liquid and sprayed it on some herbs. The result after two days was that the plant effectively grew two years' worth. This was much better than the original product, and with this experiment, Han Li had learned an important rule.

On the next experiment, Han Li did not bother to dilute the jade green droplet, letting a drop of the green liquid fall onto a stalk of ginseng. On the second day, Han Li had unexpectedly saw that the ginseng became virtually indistinguishable from wild hundred year old ginseng. This experiment made Han Li happier than ever, not because he now owned a rare ingredient, but because he had confirmed the usage of the mysterious droplet of liquid.

Afterwards, Han Li decided to set aside some of the green liquid for experimentation, while the rest would be placed in other containers like

porcelain, jade bottles and even silver bottles. However, he soon discovered that none of the bottles were able to contain the liquid for longer than a minute. After the liquid was taken out from the bottle, it needed to be used within a minute. Otherwise, it would slowly disappear without a trace. Even the diluted form of the liquid had the same result, albeit it could last for a longer amount of time. Even if other liquids were mixed together, they would disappear without a trace soon afterwards.

After many attempts, Han Li gave up on storing the liquid in any other container. It appears that he wouldn't be able to stockpile this mysterious liquid. Not going to lose any sleep over it, Han Li proceeded on experimenting on the potency of the liquid on the herbal ingredients.

Han Li brought out a bundle of Three Crow Grass and used the liquid on it. Almost immediately, it had turned into a hundred year old yellow colored Three Crow Grass. Just from a single drop of the liquid, its age would increase by a 100 years!

After seeing such an effect, Han Li made extensive use of the liquid for the next two months. Every time he was able to acquire more liquid within this bottle, he would drip it onto this strand of Three Crow Grass. It gradually turned from a yellow color to a yellowy black color. In the end, it turned jet black which was the result of it successfully aging to become a thousand year old Three Crow Grass.

After the success of this particular experiment, it would appear that with patience, the Three Crow Grass would be able to be constantly aged and thus improved. However, there wasn't much point to this. He was already satisfied to know that he was able to deliberately harness the liquid's effect. Besides, he didn't need such ancient ingredients; just about a hundred years old would be enough for him.

After this long series of experimentation, Han Li finally decided to take a break. It came to his attention that Elder Mo had been away from the mountain for quite a long time now.

Right now, Han Li was holding the thousand year old Three Crow Grass in his hand while he sat back on his bed with a lackadaisical expression.

His eyes were looking at the Three Crow Grass as if he was studying it. But in reality, if one were to look at the disorderly eyes of Han Li, they would know that he wasn't paying attention to the Three Crow Grass at all. Instead, he was staring off into the sky, thinking of everything else.

He no longer had the feeling of joy from when he first created this 1000-year old Three Crow Grass. Instead, he was now thinking about the dangers this little bottle could bring to him, and what precautions he should take.

Han Li had seen time and time again in the books of Elder Mo's library about people who suffered terrible fates as a result of acquiring a precious treasure. This bottle in his hand was definitely a precious treasure. If someone else were to discover the existence of this bottle, then he doubted that he would live to see the next day. For example, if a hall leader was to find out, then there was no way they would let this go. They would stop at nothing to seize the treasure and kill the owner, before letting anyone else find out.

"I cannot tell anyone of this bottle, and I must be careful of how I use it. The way how this bottle collected light is far too noticeable and could easily be discovered by anyone watching," Han Li thought to himself. He had to keep his mouth shut about this in order to ensure no one would be able to find out his secret.

"However, I am in a position where I need to use herbs to cultivate. If I don't use this bottle, it would be a terrible waste. I must find a way to get the best of both worlds." He thought about his cultivation needs for a moment with some sadness. It went without saying that his cultivation was the top priority. Even Doctor Mo was aware that Han Li had barely made any progress in the past few years.

Chapter 27: Creating Legendary Elixirs

While Doctor Mo was away, Han Li knew that the bottle would temporarily be safe within God Hand Valley because he was the only one there. Normally, no outsider would rashly enter the valley. This guaranteed a small time period where it was unlikely for anything unexpected to occur.

Han Li had already estimated when Doctor Mo would return. If Doctor Mo could not find any good medicinal ingredients in the nearby regions, he would probably want to go look in more remote locations. It was very likely that he would have to go to one of the ancient forests deep in the mountains where men rarely ventured. Only in those kinds of desolate regions would there be any chances of obtaining a few rare medicinal ingredients. However, Doctor Mo would need at least a year in order to travel into the mountains, gather medicinal ingredients, and return to the valley.

Doctor Mo had already been absent for almost half a year. Han Li estimated that he had another six to seven months before Doctor Mo returned to the Seven Mysteries Sect. With the time he had left, Han Li would do his utmost to hasten the growth of as many useful medicinal herbs as possible. He knew that he could not blindly squander the green liquid, so he planned to acquire only the medicinal ingredients that he would use in a few precious formulas.

Han Li quickly proceeded to make the medicines that would augment his strength and help him break through bottlenecks. They were exactly the medicinal formulas that Doctor Mo had left the valley to concoct. However, Doctor Mo was forced to venture outside of the valley due to a lack of necessary medicinal ingredients. Any one of these ingredients would be virtually impossible for an ordinary household to obtain on the market because of their sheer rarity. The cultivators of JiangHu would even fight over these rare treasures with all their might.

(TL: Jiang Hu, martial world
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wuxia#Jianghu>)

With Doctor Mo's extremely brilliant medical expertise, he could concoct medicines that only he knew how to concoct, including never before seen formulas. Even so, although Doctor Mo knew the method of producing these medicines, he was unable to do anything if he lacked the ingredients. Doctor Mo could only sigh.

When Han Li had previously studied the art of healing under Doctor Mo's tutelage, he had been greatly interested in these rare recipes. Although he never previously expected that he would be able to concoct these precious elixirs, he remembered many of these recipes. Doctor Mo had met Han Li's enthusiasm to learn these formulas with an indifferent attitude. Whenever Han Li asked, Doctor Mo would teach Han Li with great detail; nothing was concealed from his disciple. Doctor Mo probably believed that his formulas and knowledge would be lost forever if he didn't pass them down.

Concocting these formulas had now become Han Li's pastime. He eagerly went to the fields every day to accelerate the growth of the medicinal herbs in accordance to the formulas' requirements. When doing so, he didn't dare to relax in the slightest since he knew that his time was limited. He had to hurry and finish mixing these medicines before Doctor Mo returned. Once the doctor arrived, Han Li would conceal and put the bottle away, no longer able to easily use the bottle once more.

Han Li did not have even the slightest degree of confidence that he would be able to use the small bottle in Doctor Mo's presence without revealing its power. He knew in his heart that Doctor Mo was an extremely shrewd and careful person. So Han Li did not intend to tell Doctor Mo about the bottle's secret.

Han Li thought the relation he had with Doctor Mo was quite peculiar. It was definitely not as simple as an ordinary master-disciple relationship.

Doctor Mo often looked at him with a peculiar look. This always made Han Li think that Doctor Mo was concealing a deadly secret from him. Especially in the past two years, Han Li felt that this feeling had grown even stronger. This made Doctor Mo and Han Li incapable of having the

intimate relationship between a common master and disciple. If there were nothing to say, there would be silence.

Doctor Mo had actually treated him exceptionally well in his daily life, never physically or verbally abusing Han Li. In addition, Doctor Mo spared no pain or effort to help create the best conditions for Han Li to cultivate the chant. However, there seemed to be a barrier of separation that existed between the master and disciple, an awkward atmosphere that drifted between them.

Doctor Mo clearly realized that this gap existed. However, he did not feel the slightest need to remedy the mutual indifference between master and disciple, leaving it to be. The only time when he directly involved himself in Han Li's life was whenever he urged Han Li to increase the pace of Han Li's cultivation. Every time Doctor Mo visited Han Li, the grotesque aspect of his gaze gradually lessened, so much so that after a long period of time, it was no longer displayed.

However, Han Li's keen sixth sense faintly informed him that Doctor Mo hadn't truly abandoned his plans, but rather ingeniously concealed his intentions. Thus, Han Li's vigilance against Doctor Mo had deepened further. Under these circumstances, how could he possibly dare let Doctor Mo know of the bottle's secret?!

Han Li had learned an unshakable lesson from reading a large amount of history books: "refrain from hurting others but guard against those trying to hurt you."

Regardless of whether Doctor Mo truly wanted to harm him, strengthening Han Li's vigilance wouldn't be a bad decision, even if his feelings were mistaken. If Doctor Mo had truly intended to harm him, Han Li's strengthened vigilance could possibly prevent him from suffering a severe injury. If his sixth sense was mistaken, then a strengthened vigilance wouldn't harm him. Either way, Han Li wouldn't take the initiative to harm his master. Han Li was still Doctor Mo's apprentice and would do his utmost to be a filial apprentice.

Han Li wasn't too comfortable with his feelings regarding Doctor Mo.

After all, this kind of strange master-disciple relationship was completely unheard of in the Seven Mysteries Sect. Thinking of this, Han Li could not help but sigh.

The mysterious green bottle absolutely couldn't be used once Doctor Mo returned. However, Han Li knew that even if he managed to somehow hide it from Doctor Mo, another person from the Seven Mysteries Sect might uncover the secret by accident. His best choice was to hide the bottle away forever and act as if it had never existed.

Unwilling to forever separate himself from the bottle, Han Li made up his mind to use the bottle cautiously and secretly once Doctor Mo returned. Once he came upon this decision, Han Li relaxed his mind and fell asleep on his bed.

In the following months, Han Li secretly used the bottle's green liquid to accelerate the growth of large quantities of precious medicinal ingredients. He then used these medicinal ingredients in accordance to the formula, concocting many rare medicines. But in the process of concocting the elixirs, many failures had occurred. Each failure had left Han Li a lasting soreness since the ingredients used to make the medicines were rare and of the highest quality. Each failure represented a waste of an innumerable amount of silver. However, he could not be blamed. These were the first time he compounded these formulas, so failing several times was inevitable. Even if Doctor Mo had personally compounded these medicines, he would have made one or two mistakes. Only in this way could Han Li console himself.

"Yellow Dragon Pellet," "Pure Spirit Powder," "Gold Essence Pill," and "Vitality Raising Pellet." These rare medicines, rarely seen on the market, were placed in tens of small bottles. One by one, they were neatly arranged in front of Han Li. As Han Li looked at these small bottles, his face lit up with delight. With these miraculous medicines, he could reach the fifth and sixth stage with expending too much effort, not to mention the fourth stage.

Inside these medicines, "Yellow Dragon Pellet" and "Gold Essence Pill" would assist him in increasing his strength, thereby raising his power,

and had the wonderful effect of rebuilding his body and bones. “Pure Spirit Powder” was a world-famous detoxifying panacea, capable of dissolving thousands of deadly poisons. Lastly, “Vitality Raising Pellet” was a legendary medicine that had a surprising effect on internal injuries. Regardless of how many grave internal and external injuries one suffered from, so long as the person eating the pill remained alive, any injury would be immediately healed, allowing one’s life to be preserved.

Chapter 28: Doctor Mo Returns

Originally, Han Li hadn't planned on concocting medicinal pills for other purposes than aiding him in his cultivation. But after thinking about it, he decided that, no matter what, he was still a martial artist! Who knew if one day he would be struck by a natural disaster or get embroiled in the rampage of one of the various martial factions in Jiang Hu and killed? It would be for the best to prepare some medicines for wounds and poisons in advance, because if he were to be injured or poisoned without having any medicine nearby, that would be too unfortunate.

With this mindset, Han Li had decided to make more of two types of medicines, Pure Spirit Powder and Vitality Raising Pill, to prepare himself for any accidents. One person could only live one life after all, and Han Li didn't want to die an untimely death.

Because he was constantly making medicines, his cultivation with the chant had slowed down considerable. But this was unavoidable, since there were many things in the world to be perfected, and there would surely always be something that one had to give up on.

(TL: AKA cost-benefit analysis)

After refining medicinal pills for half the day, he began to consume them, starting with the "Yellow Dragon Pellet" and the "Gold Essence Pill." These two medicines each truly deserved to be considered the panacea of legends that could shock everyone with its power. After eating them, he had effortlessly broken through the bottleneck and reached the fourth stage of the chant.

Once he reached the fourth stage, Han Li had immediately felt the difference between his current and past self. His five senses had exploded into a whole new realm as everything had suddenly turned brighter and much more distinct. Previously, he wasn't able to make out minute features out in the distance, but now he was able to see them on an enlarged scale, clearer than ever. With his eyes, he could easily see the

small insects that were crawling about the edges of his room. His sense of hearing had completely changed as well. Sounds he had never heard before could be heard to a noticeable degree, like the rustling sounds of an earthworm crawling through the ground or the buzzing sounds of an insect flying through the air. These sounds were so loud, it was almost as if they were taking place next to his ear. Everything could be heard so clearly, but aside from that, Han Li could even make out some new scents thanks to his improved sense of smell.

Han Li was overjoyed, because this was the very first time that his efforts in practicing this chant had actually paid off. This made him realise that the oracular chant he was condemning before was not totally useless; instead, it had a mysterious and unique aspect to it that could only be unlocked through cultivation.

Previously, even though his senses did indeed improve each time he had broken through to a new stage, none of those changes were as drastic as when he had reached the fourth stage. It was almost as if he had become a completely different person.

Aside from this, he also felt that his body movements were a lot quicker than before. Even his mind and vitality had grown stronger. Even if Han Li didn't sleep for 3 or 5 days, he still felt as wide awake as always.

With so many changes occurring, Han Li sat there and took note of each and every single change to his body. These changes opened a new world of sensation to him, and so he was reluctant to do anything other than relish in these feelings.

Only now did he realize that all of these changes had appeared only at the fourth stage of the chant. It could be considered that he was at the small-success stage of the oracular chant only after reaching the fourth stage.

He couldn't help but think that this fourth stage had brought about such an unforgettable sensation! If the fourth stage was like this, then surely breaking through to the fifth or even sixth stage would be even more magnificent!

Soon after Han Li finally broke through and understood the subtleties of this cultivation method, his master—Doctor Mo—had finally returned to the valley. However, he wasn't alone, as he had brought back a mysterious person.

The moment Doctor Mo returned to the valley, Han Li heard his all too familiar cough. He had been in his cultivation room striving to advance one more stage, but the moment he had heard Doctor Mo's voice, he left the room to head down to the valley and greet him. It had been a year since he had last met his master, so it was time to meet Doctor Mo once again.

The moment Han Li saw Doctor Mo, he was extremely shocked. Doctor Mo was still the same in figure, but there was an ashen complexion on his face with the smallest hint of anger. Although he had originally been yellow with illness, he had never looked so haggard in such an extreme manner as he did now.

But what surprised Han Li the most was the mysterious person behind Doctor Mo. The person was wrapped in a black mantle that completely covered every single part of the body so that not a single inch of skin could be seen. The figure was rather large and was taller than Han Li by at least two heads. Because of the mantle that covered the entirety of the person's body, Han Li wasn't able to determine the person's facial appearance. At the very least, he could tell that the person's expression was especially fierce and extremely ugly.

Han Li suppressed the questions on his mind as he hurriedly greeted Doctor Mo with a respectful tone and waited for Doctor Mo to say something back.

He knew that while the Doctor Mo did not care for such traditions, there was a need for the disciple expected to greet the master respectfully. This was something that could not be discarded as a useless tradition since it flattered the master, making the master more likely to treat the disciple well.

Han Li had also understood Doctor Mo's thoughts. Since Doctor Mo had

always pushed him to practice the chants to cultivate and had not seen Han Li in a very long time, he would undoubtedly ask about how far he had gotten with the chant.

As expected, the moment Doctor Mo saw Han Li approach him, he stared blankly for a moment before coughing twice and speaking up.

“How far have you gotten with the chant? Have you made a breakthrough?” There was an anxious look of hope on his face.

Han Li long since expected that this question would come and had prepared an answer beforehand.

“I’m still the same, without experiencing any significant change.” Han Li didn’t want to tell the truth of his progress because there would be no way for him to explain his sudden massive increase in training speed. It would have been impossible for Han Li to break through from the third stage to the fourth stage with his own talent in such a short amount of time.

“Extend your arm.” Doctor Mo’s expression sank and his voice became stiff.

Han Li carefully paid attention to Doctor Mo’s expression. His heart shook for a moment before becoming calm once more.

He wasn’t afraid of having his pulse taken to measure the True Qi in his body. This was because, after reaching the fourth stage, Han Li had discovered that he could freely manipulate the inner workings of his body, such as the intensity of his True Qi. He could easily control his True Qi so that it would resemble that of the third stage. With this underhanded method, he had no fear of Doctor Mo’s inspection.

Chapter 29: Rising Conflict

Doctor Mo's face showed no emotion. His eyes were half open and half closed while his hand was wrapped firmly around Han Li's wrist.

His attention was completely concentrated on the True Qi within Han Li's body. He remained silent for quite some time.

After the time it takes to make a cup of tea, Doctor Mo let out a deep breath, as if he were releasing all the vexation from his mind, and opened his eyes. A vigorous brilliance shot from his cloudy eyes, rendering any man incapable of facing him.

His expression was somber. It was very obvious to Han Li that he was dissatisfied, but Doctor Mo did not release harsh words of criticism.

He swung his arms indifferently, showing Han Li that he was about to leave.

Han Li perceptively followed close behind him. Although he was very curious about the mysterious man at his side, Han Li knew it was not the time to inquire as he wished.

After he entered the room, Doctor Mo somewhat tiredly sat in the armchair and leaned back into it, half sitting, half reclining. The vigorous brilliance had already scattered, revealing his old sickly self.

The mysterious man had followed closely from the beginning. When Doctor Mo sat down, he stood behind Doctor Mo's chair, his back upright and motionless.

Han Li knew that Doctor Mo was currently dissatisfied, but he was unwilling to open his mouth and stir Doctor Mo's foul mood up. Mimicking the mysterious man, he walked to the middle of the room and lowered his head toward Doctor Mo, staying tactfully still. He waited for for Doctor Mo to start his questioning.

For a long time, nobody spoke. Han Li was somewhat baffled and lost his patience. He thought quietly about raising his head and stealing a glance at Doctor Mo.

“If you want to look, look. Why would you possibly want to be sneaky?” Just as he raised his head halfway up, Doctor Mo’s cold, strict voice traveled over.

Han Li was startled for a second and then, he obediently raised his head. His gaze circled around Doctor Mo’s face and immediately withdrew from it.

Han Li’s face had an unusual expression. His heart sunk as if he were in a perilous situation, constantly rolling around in his chest.

How did Doctor Mo’s face suddenly become so strange? On his gray, withered face, there was a faint layer of black Qi. It was as if the black Qi had life, extending an innumerable amount of tiny tentacles and scurrying threateningly across his face. This caused Han Li to be even more fearful. Doctor Mo had replaced his former, everyday rigid expression with an expression of fierce resolution. He was watching Han Li attentively with a truly malicious gaze. The corner of his mouth revealed a slight mocking sneer.

Han Li felt the situation wasn’t favorable towards him. A somewhat restless mood spiralled in his mind while an ominous atmosphere began to spread freely in the room.

He cautiously and vigilantly decided to retreat half a step. He withdrew a cylinder from his sleeve, causing his stressed mental state to relax a bit. At this moment, he suddenly heard Doctor Mo’s soft mockery.

“A petty trick? You even dare to take it out and show it off?”

Doctor Mo’s body moved. He stood from his half reclined position with a strange momentum. “Hehe.” With a smile, his body flickered towards Han Li’s side as if he were a spectre before giving a cold laugh.

Han Li’s expression greatly changed. He knew this turn of events was far from good and hastily lifted his arm. However, his entire body went numb and he was incapable of moving a single step.

It was only until this moment that he saw that Doctor Mo’s finger leave the accupoint on his chest.

Doctor Mo was truly too fast. To Han Li's surprise, he couldn't even perceive in the slightest when Doctor Mo had taken action.

"Venerable Senior Mo, What are you going to do? Has this disciple done something wrong? Sir has always talked without hesitating. Is there any need to press this disciple's accupoint?" At this moment Han Li was no longer capable of keeping his calm. He said this to Doctor Mo with a forced smile.

Doctor Mo did not speak at all. He only hit his back a few times and lightly coughed. His appearance was much like a senile senior, too weak to resist the wind.

Han Li had just seen Doctor Mo assume a decisive and violent appearance. How could Han Li possibly dare to regard him to be some common ill old man? Instead, Han Li attached Doctor Mo's artificial frailness with even more importance.

"Doctor Mo, what about your status? There is no need to lower yourself to this disciple's level. What disadvantage would you have from undoing this disciple's accupoint? This disciple will take responsibility and forget about this matter."

.....

Han Li had continued to spout many pleasant, flattering lines.

However, Doctor Mo did not pay any attention to him and instead reached into Han Li's sleeve and removed the hidden cylinder. Then, he looked at Han Li with a gaze of mockery and contempt.

Seeing this situation, Han Li's heart suddenly sank to its greatest depths. He originally had the intention of using speech to arouse sympathy from Doctor Mo, but his plan had completely failed.

It appeared that Doctor Mo wouldn't give the slightest opportunity for Han Li to gain an advantage.

Han Li gradually grew quiet. His face became eerily calm, and he looked back at Doctor Mo with a gaze lacking even the slightest amount of emotion.

Suddenly, everything in the room had seemed to become entirely still. There was absolute silence, like the calm before a storm.

“Good! Good! Good!” Doctor Mo had suddenly let out three “Good”s.

“You are worthy of being a person that I, Mo Juren, have taken notice of. So you can hold a straight face even at this moment, calm in your hour of peril. It seems the advantage I gained by pressing your accupoint was not in vain.” Doctor Mo suddenly praised Han Li.

“Just how do you plan on dealing with me?” Han Li didn’t answer Doctor Mo’s words and asked a question instead.

“Hehe! How will I deal with you?” Doctor Mo repeated Han Li’s question, refusing to answer.

“How will I deal with you? It will depend on your own performance.”

“What do you mean?” Han Li wrinkled his brow, vaguely guessing a few of Doctor Mo’s intentions.

“I won’t say. Use your intelligence. You should be able to somewhat understand, right?”

“I can only guess a bit, but I don’t understand the exact specifics of your plan.” Han Li did not deny it, stating it very bluntly.

“Very good, that is the correct way. You can ask me any questions, don’t keep them to yourself.” Doctor Mo face wore a sinister smile. The black Qi on his face thickened into many layers, causing his appearance to become even more malevolent.

“I know you have always been guarded against me and did not truly see me as your master. But regardless, it does not matter. I also do not truly see you as my disciple.” Doctor Mo said this with a slight snort.

Chapter 30: A Hero's Final Road

"How old do you think I am?" His cheek muscles throbbed visibly as he stiffly asked a strange question.

"Based on your appearance, you look to be older than sixty years old, but since you asked this question, your age must not match your appearance. You are either way older or way younger than you appear to be."

"Zeze! For a brat from the countryside to become a sharp and intelligent person, you sure live up to the name of an "Eternal Spring Arts" practitioner!" Doctor Mo's mouth continued to praise Han Li, but he stared at his disciple with a feverish gleam.

(TL: Zeze is the sound of clicking one's tongue)

"You guessed correctly. I am only 37 as of this year." A number that caused Han Li to feel disbelief came out from Doctor Mo's mouth

"That's impossible?" Han Li said in surprise, unable to maintain his composure.

"Impossible! It is indeed impossible! The people who see me, not even mentioning sixty, would tell others that I am an elder in my seventies. I'm afraid no one would be able to guess my true age," Doctor Mo said as his voice suddenly became high and sharp in pitch. To Han Li's ears, the ear-piercing sound caused extreme discomfort, as if it touched upon a sore spot within his heart.

"I, Mo Juren, used to be so famous in my early years that at one point in time, within the Lan prefecture of Yue County, I barehandedly established my own spot within the heavens, making a name for myself. Heihei! At that time, everybody heard of my prestigious name "Ghost Hand" within the Lan Province; whether they were good or bad, those who follow me lived while those who went against me died." Doctor Mo resumed his normal pitch and used a deep and slow tone to narrate his story. Following his own narration, his eyes took emitted a sharpness that was comparable to a blade's edge, as if he were back in the past when he was high spirited and in a position of power.

Listening to Doctor Mo's story, Han Li was secretly shocked. He never thought that his master would have had such a renown name at one point in time.

"Regrettably, good things don't last forever. Right when I entered my thirties and was preparing to take a big step forward in spreading my name, I fell under the plot of a despicable character and was poisoned by my own trusted aid. Even by relying on my impressive medicinal knowledge I was only able to prevent the poison from flaring up but was unable to completely recover, causing my power to decrease dramatically. As a result, I was unable to maintain my position in the north. Fearing that my enemies' clans would take advantage of my weakness, I was forced to abandon my profession and family in order to disappear without a trace. I could only travel to other parts of Yue County to look for a cure to help me regain my previous skills." As he was narrating, Doctor Mo became lost within his own story and tightly clenched his two fists. His fingernails dug into his palm, causing flesh blood to flow, but he did not notice this. Only his face revealed any expression; his teeth gnashed together, giving him a savage appearance. Doctor Mo's vicious expression could cause anyone who witnessed it to tremble in cold sweat, showing that he still harboured a bone-deep hatred for the despicable figure who poisoned him.

Listening to the deep hatred within his words, Han Li could not help but feel goosebumps. A cold feeling began to rise within his heart.

"Heaven has eyes, and through some mysterious means, I came upon a strange book called "Scripture of Longevity." I spent tremendous amounts of energy trying to understand it, and from reading it, I found a shortcut to recover my former martial prowess. I followed the steps, and..." Doctor Mo suddenly stopped, but his face betrayed him by showing anger and remorse.

"As a result, you now look like a ghost," said Han Li as he tried to help Doctor Mo complete his sentence.

(TL: 鬼様 literally means "looks like a ghost," meaning that he looks horrendous)

“That’s correct. I didn’t think that by following the steps within the book, I would regain my former powers at the cost of an accelerated aging into a prematurely aged old man that resembles a mixture between a human and a corpse.” Doctor Mo sadly dropped his head and was too dejected to express any anger at Han Li’s satiric comment.

“By now, you should have found out the reason for your accelerated aging, right?”

“It was because my method was inappropriate, causing evil Qi to invade my body. For me, the energy consumed in a single day is equal to the energy needed to live ten days as a normal human. As a result, I am constantly overtaxing my lifespan. Thankfully, I have proficiently trained in a skill to take care of my body and have followed the instructions in the book to concoct a secret medicine which decreases the speed of my aging, allowing me to last all these years.”

“How is the oracular chant that I cultivate relate to your problem?” Han Li asked bluntly concerning the core of the issue.

“Not long after I became the way I am now, I learned from the book of a method to solve this issue, and is the ‘Eternal Spring Arts’ which you are practicing. I only need to have a practitioner of the fourth stage to use his Eternal Spring Arts Qi to help me massage and open my mixue acupoints to regain my lost life force.”

“Why do you specifically need me? Can’t you just find a random person to practice the chant?” Han Li muttered to himself for a moment, revealing a question that has been buried within himself for a long time.

“Do you think this Eternal Spring Arts Technique can be practice by just any random person? This chant not only requires a young man to practice from the an early age but also requires its practitioners to have body that contains ‘Spiritual Roots.’ Even though I don’t know what ‘Spiritual Roots’ are, I have looked through countless hundreds of disciples before you, all of which were incapable of practicing the Eternal Spring Arts Technique,” said Doctor Mo with an annoyed face.

“It requires such conditions?” Han Li stared blankly; he never thought

that training in this chant would require such strict conditions.

“In my last remaining months, I thought that I would never find someone who could practice the incantations, so I gave up and started to wander. I never thought that I would suddenly meet the Sect Leader of the Seven Mysteries Sect, who was also being plotted against. As a similar individual suffering from similar circumstances, I gave a hand and saved the Sect Leader’s insignificant life. Immediately. The Sect Leader invited me to the Seven Mysteries Sect, where I became a valued member. I had planned on living the remainder of my life on the mountain, hidden in seclusion. Heihei*! But all of a sudden, a miracle happened! Originally, I was worried that my medicinal skills would not be passed on, so I invited the two of you into the valley to accept you two as my disciples. As luck would have it,, on a whim, I let you two try to cultivate the Eternal Spring Arts Incantation. Maybe it was because I was still holding onto a small bit of hope. But there seemed to be demons and gods at work* since I suddenly let you two try out the Eternal Spring Arts incantation. In reality, even if you two had been unable to practice the incantation, I would have still accepted you guys as my disciples and bestowed upon you all of my medicinal knowledge, but I never would have thought that you would have a reaction to the incantation. Haha! It seems Heaven never halts one’s path to cultivation!”

(TL: *Heihei= small chuckle

*demons and gods at work (idiom)= when an event is only explainable by the supernatural)

Doctor Mo revealed all this in one breath, causing his face to look red from the lack of air. He appeared very pleased with his stroke of good fortune.

“I have not yet practiced up to the fourth stage of the Eternal Spring Arts Technique, so why did you stop me at this moment to discuss this matter with me?” Han Li finally asked the question he was most concerned about.

“You only have yourself to blame for this! I spent so much blood and

energy on you, yet you still can not satisfy my demands, always playing tricks on me. You are only lacking this one last step, yet you choose to continue on slowly, unwilling to advance to the next stage. Originally, I was planning to wait another two years, but when I went down the mountains this time, I was recognized by a member of an enemy clan. Through an intense battle, even though I won and had killed my enemy, I consumed large amounts of energy, which greatly shortened my lifespan. Even if I were to use all of my abilities, I would only be able to prolong my life for another year. How can I possibly wait any longer?” Doctor Mo’s originally proud expression vanished without a trace, replaced by a savage expression as he roared out at Han Li.

After Han Li finished listening, his expression remained the same. He didn’t reveal even a trace of being stirred.

However, his heart was like a raging sea, which was completely different from his confident and unwavering appearance.

Even though he knew from the beginning that Doctor Mo had been placing an unsettling importance on Han Li’s cultivation, he never thought that there would such an intense story behind this. Doctor Mo’s identity and experience far surpassed the scope of his imagination.

(TL: Title Explanation. As you know grand “heroes” in wuxia and xianxia aren’t always kind and benevolent. They are often vicious, ruthless and merciless, and are ‘heroic’ from their grand feats and strength. The actual title is defined as a formidable character which I found to best translated as “Hero”.)

Chapter 31: Insect Corpse Pill

Han Li felt numbed as fear, regret, and helplessness filled his heart. Despite trying to delay the inevitable, he was still unable to figure out how to extricate himself from this predicament, and as a result, he grew panicked.

He was, after all, still very young unable to win against Doctor Mo's vast years of experience in Jiang Hu. Doctor Mo could most likely counter any cunning and ruthless method that Han Li came up with. Feeling as exposed as a paper tiger, Han Li started sweating profusely.

Doctor Mo took note of the myriad expressions that flashed past Han Li's face and was immensely satisfied with the pressure he caused. From his experiences, only when one was unsettled and confused would it be easier to extract the truth.

"You really think that I was delaying my cultivation on purpose?" Han Li was surprised that Doctor Mo came to this conclusion.

"Obviously. It's already been two years and yet you weren't able to reach the fourth stage? You really think I can't read what you're thinking? In the past, you only spent 3 years reaching the first three stages so even if the fourth stage was difficult to cultivate without the aid of spiritual herbs, it would impossible for you to have no progress in your cultivation," Doctor Mo explained as his eyebrows arched up, emitting a killing intent. It was as if all the dissatisfaction that he ever felt was bubbling out to the surface today.

"Seems like no matter how I try to explain, Doctor Mo will never believe me." Han Li smiled bitterly. Never would he have thought that because trying to hide the progress of his cultivation would lead him into a deeper hole filled with Doctor Mo's endless suspicion. He really kicked the stone on which he had placed himself.

(TL: "kicking the stone on which he had placed himself" = digging your own grave)

"Enough! I have no wish to listen to any more of your bullsh*t. I shall

give you one more year. Do you think you will be able to reach the fourth stage by then?" Doctor Mo coldly laughed as he stared icily at Han Li, waiting for his answer with a serious expression on his face.

Han Li's mind was very clear. He knew his answer would not only affect Doctor Mo's life but also his own survival.

"I should be very clear that there is no way I will be able to say no. Come, unlock my acupoints." Han Li relaxed as he accepted the inevitable.

After Doctor Mo heard his words, his face recovered slightly as praise reflected in his eyes. However, he did not unlock Han Li's acupoint immediately. Instead, he took out an exquisitely carved seal boxed from within his robes.

"I can't be assured by your words alone. What would happen if you say one thing but do another; if you refuse to put invest any effort in your cultivation, there would not be any difference from now. Because my own life is at stake, I have to add another layer of insurance," stated Doctor Mo in an icy tone.

Before opening Han Li's acupoints, Doctor Mo had to take extra measures to ensure his success. He cautiously unsealed the box, removed a white pill and placed the pill in the center before unsealing Han Li's acupoint. Before Han Li could move, Doctor Mo already placed the white pill in front of him.

"You are an intelligent person. There is no need for me to waste time talking too much, you should know what to do." Doctor Mo looked at him, harboring malicious intents in his heart.

Han Li moved his numbed limbs about, and without saying anything, he took the white pill out from the box. In front of Doctor Mo, Han Li immediately placed the white pill inside his mouth and swallowed it, unwilling to show any signs of weaknesses.

"Clap clap!" "Excellent! He who suits his action to the times are great men indeed. As long as you help me return back to normal, I will reward you greatly. There is already a rift between us, so it is impossible for me

to accept you as my disciple and pass onto you other techniques, but still, granting you a life of wealth is still possible for me.” Doctor Mo clapped his hands as he sincerely promised Han Li his reward.

“Now, you should be able to tell me the effect of the pill i just consumed in case I accidentally overstep the restrictions and lose my life,” Han Li expressionlessly asked Doctor Mo.

“Keke, the name of this pill is the Insect Corpse Pill It’s concocted from pure herbal components but in addition, the recipe requires different poisonous worm eggs. After being consuming, it will incubate inside your body for a year. You can rest assured, though. In this one year, I can guarantee that it will not affect you. After one year, once you consume the antidote, the pill will melt away, leaving no traces behind. However, if you do not consume the antidote after a year, the worm will hatch within your body and consume your innards for nourishment, eating you from inside out and leaving you in so much pain that you would rather die than suffer the agony. The pain will last for a total of three days and nights, and you will slowly die an agonizing death.” Doctor Mo slowly explained the effects of the pill as he silently warned Han Li.

After Han Li heard the effects of the pill he just consumed, shudders involuntarily spread throughout his body as his expression changed for the worst. Anger inflamed his heart, but before he could do or say anything, Doctor Mo unleashed his trump card.

“Oh right, I heard that your family is living pretty well thanks to you. Do they have enough silvers to spend? If not, just let me know. Since you’ll be doing me a great favor, I will specially take care of your family members for you.” Doctor Mo smiled as he patted Han Li’s shoulder.

Han Li froze as his face turned green. Doctor Mo’s words made it impossible for his spirit to be calm and still.

Using the last vestige of his determination, he gritted his teeth and forced himself to keep silent. He was worried that he would say something to Doctor Mo that he might regret. Han Li understood that there was no way Doctor Mo would not use his family against him.

“Don’t worry, Doctor Mo. I promise to reach the fourth stage within a year.” Without a choice, Han Li bit his lips as he assured Doctor Mo.

Under Doctor Mo’s threats, Han Li could only submit. He was still unable to sever the last trace of humanity in his heart and disregard the lives and death of his parents.

Now, the weaknesses of Han Li was grasped by Doctor Mo, and even if he wished to die, he would still have to seek the approval of Doctor Mo. Han Li knew that he had been thoroughly defeated this time.

After Doctor Mo heard Han Li’s words, he released a sigh of relief. His nervousness was not less than Han Li’s, but Doctor Mo’s face was akin to a stone mask as he had managed to keep his emotions under tight control.

“This Eternal Spring Arts is indeed extraordinary. This young brat is still so young but is already difficult to handle.” Doctor Mo did not know whether he felt envy or jealousy in his heart.

Actually, the effects of the Eternal Spring Arts varied for those who cultivate it. As for Han Li, he had already been quite intelligent since he was young, so after cultivating the Eternal Spring Arts, his wisdom grew beyond his peers.

Chapter 32: Heroic Spirit

Han Li turned his body as he prepared to leave. When he reached the entrance, he asked a final question.

“Ever since he arrived, the brother standing behind Doctor Mo has not said a single word. Where did he come from?”

After hearing Han Li’s question, Doctor Mo deigned not to answer and only replied with a cunning laugh.

“You are so intelligent, why don’t you take a guess? I’m sure you will be able to find out.”

Han Li shook his head and proceeded to leave Doctor Mo’s residence. It was unknown whether he was just unwilling to make a guess or unable to get the correct answer.

After he stepped out of the door, Han Li’s expression turned heavy and downcast.

“In this conflict between Doctor Mo and I, I was as helpless as a baby chick, completely under his control. I was really too naive, thinking that my small amount of cleverness would be able to outfox him. In the end, the Five Poisons Water that I concocted was unable to display its full might and was wasted. When I return, I must seriously think about how to best increase my strength.”

Thinking of this, he turned to the direction of his residence and began walking in large strides. He appeared to be extremely unwilling to be controlled by Doctor Mo.

Back at Doctor Mo’s residence, Doctor Mo stared dumbstruck at the floor. There was a bowl-sized hole cut out on the wood panels. Just now, due to his carelessness, he almost died to the poison that had corroded the floor. Because the poison was so potent, Doctor Mo could not help but curse in anger:

“That son of a turtle, when did he learn to concoct such a deadly poison! I have never taught him before. It seems like I have underestimated him;

he can be extremely cruel and merciless, even to an extent that he can turn his back on old associates.”

(TL: “son of a turtle” or “turtle egg” is a Chinese pun for “bastard”)

Han Li did not know that he had caused such a great shock to Doctor Mo. After returning to his room, he slumped his head on his bed as sleep overtook him. The battle of strength and wits had exhausted him, and thus, he needed rest to recover.

After a long period of time, Han Li slowly roused himself from his sleep as he sat up and looked to the skies. Dawn was already approaching. It seemed as if he had slept much longer than he expected.

The Han Li who had awakened did not get off from his bed immediately. Sitting on his bed and resting his chin on both of his hands, he started analyzing ways to escape from Doctor Mo’s control.

Obviously, he was safe for this one year period. Because Doctor Mo needed to protect his own life, he would certainly not make any moves against him within this period of time. But after the year passed, it would be hard to guarantee anything.

Han Li did not worry about the “problem” of Eternal Spring Arts. He had already broken through to the fourth stage a few days ago. He was not worried because he was extremely confident that he could even reach the 5th level after a year.

The “problem” of the Insect Corpse Pill was easily settled as well. When the time came, Han Li would just need to stop suppressing his true abilities and simply wrestle the cure away from Doctor Mo.

All of a sudden, Han Li thought of something. He pulled out the medicinal bottle and took from it a droplet of jade green medicinal pill before consuming it. After a while, the effect of the medicine took place as he silently observed himself inwardly.

“Ke! Doctor Mo did really tell the truth about the Insect Corpse Pill. The Pure Spirit Powder, which was a panacea for most of the world’s poisons, was unable to have any effect when consumed to combat the effects of

the Insect Corpse Pill. It seems like I must really wait for a year before I can obtain the antidote.” Han Li murmured.

He got down from his bed and paced around his room, trying to think of other alternatives to his problems.

Han Li did not completely believe the words that Doctor Mo had told him earlier. Despite of this, he had no choice but to comply to Doctor Mo’s demands because he held Han Li’s weakness in his palm.

Han Li was unsure if Doctor Mo’s promise was real. If it was real, it was simple as merely following Doctor Mo’s instructions—Han Li would be assured and would have no need to come up with any preparations. But if Doctor Mo was lying to him, Han Li knew that he would probably suffer a fate worse than death a year from now if he did not prepare any countermeasures.

Han Li repeatedly analysed all of the possible ways to attack his problem and felt that there weren’t any good solutions.

Now both Han Li and Doctor Mo could be considered on the same straits. Han Li was afraid that Doctor Mo would harm him after he accomplished his objective. On the other hand, Doctor Mo was worried that Han Li might not practice his cultivation assiduously and that the delay would cost him his life.

Initially, Han Li had some methods that he could use to threaten Doctor Mo, but who would have expected that Doctor Mo would grasp his weaknesses so quickly and use his family as insurance?

“Could it be that I don’t even have the slightest control over my own life?” Han Li helplessly sighed.

“No, there is no way that I would allow this to happen. Leaving my destiny in the hands another would undoubtedly be the most foolish decision I have ever made.”

Despite saying so, even after contemplating for a long period of time, Han Li was still unable to think of any good solution. Eventually, he decided on a solution that wasn’t exactly a solution.

(TL: Confusing, I know)

He decided to increase his strength in every aspect. Even if Doctor Mo wanted his life one year from now, Han Li would still have some insurance against Doctor Mo.

This was truly a stupid idea. He could only passively defend and could not actively attack. But currently, he could not think of any other way besides increasing his own strength!

After making his decision, Han Li decided to go out for a walk. He opened his door and walked outside his residence, stretching his body while yawning.

“My destiny lies in my own hands, and I will never let others control my fate.”

Chapter 33: Private Exchange

Han Li hoisted up a rope attached to a bucket and threw the bucket into the mountain spring. Once the bucket was filled to the brim with spring water, he pulled it back up.

Without expending any strength, Han Li easily lifted the wooden bucket above his head, and with a flick of his wrist, a “Hua” sound rang out as the water in the bucket poured over his head, drenching him all the way to his toes.

“How refreshing!”

“How comfortable!”

Han Li and another youth both exclaimed in delight. The water was a soothing effect in the hot summer climate. The heat was unbearably hot, so as they poured spring water over their bodies, they shivered in delight.

“Heh heh! Junior Disciple Han, you really found a good place. This creek was well hidden, and yet you somehow managed to discover it,” The youth with a callous look on his face suddenly stated.

“This is nothing. There are even more remote places that are harder to discover. I have only managed to find a few, but it’s a pity that none of the locations I found had spring water as magnificent as this one,” The other youth straightforwardly replied.

The youth who replied, was Han Li, and the one with the callous expression was none other than Li Feiyu.

Ever since Li Feiyu obtained the first delivery of pain-relieving medicine from Han Li and tested them, he found that the medicine’s effectiveness was extremely good. One dose diminished the backlash caused by the Essence Extraction Pill by a great amount.

After experiencing Han Li’s pain-relieving medicine, Li Feiyu couldn’t live without it. Whenever he didn’t use the medicine, he would suffer a painful backlash from the Essence Extraction Pill. Although Han Li had given him a year’s supply of pain-relieving medicine, Li Feiyu had

completely used up his supply within a few short months.

Facing the pain of the backlash that almost broke his limits, Li Feiyu had no choice but to thicken his skin and ask Han Li for help. The current Han Li wanted to increase his own strength, so he used Li Feiyu's needs to his own advantage. After knowing that Li Feiyu was selected to enter the Seven Supreme Division, Han Li asked Li Feiyu for secret skills stored in the Seven Supreme Division in exchange for pain-relieving medicine.

The usually silent Li Feiyu agreed immediately upon hearing Han Li's request.

In order to not let others discover the secret agreement between him and Li Feiyu, Han Li decided to explore the Celestial Rainbow Mountain for a remote location where they could do their trade in private.

The two of them decided to secretly meet up after a set amount of time. In their secret location Han Li would hand over the pain-relieving medicine to Li Feiyu, and Li Feiyu would teach Han Li some of his secret arts that he gained from the Seven Supreme Division.

Just like this, they were both extremely satisfied by their trade, which continued for half a year.

Li Feiyu and Han Li had taken to each other during this half year. Unknowingly, they became close friends that could talk about anything under the sun..

Li Feiyu was very satisfied with the spot Han Li found, specially the small creek it contained. They stood in a medium-sized depression surrounded by tall mountain peaks. In order to gain access to it, they had to crawl on their hands and feet through an extremely narrow tunnel.

Most importantly, this place had a flowing spring, which they had access to during the unbearably hot summer!

After they exercised and bathed themselves in the cool mountain spring water, they felt an incomparable sense of comfort and satisfaction.

Once they were done washing themselves, Han Li glanced at Li Feiyu and asked, "Earlier, you taught me the Ferocious Serpentine Strike.

Although it's a formidable technique, it is too vicious, so I don't think it is suitable for me. Are there any other techniques that are more gentle?"

"Junior Disciple Han, do you really think that I am the only disciple in the Seven Supreme Division or that I can learn whatever I wished to learn? I could only select a small amount of techniques to study. Not to mention, my martial arts has always been overbearing in nature, so of course I would pick a formidable "hard" technique ." Li Feiyu explained to Han Li, exasperated by his request.

"Senior Disciple Li is the leader amongst all the disciples. How could you be comparable to the normal disciples in the Seven Supreme Division?"

Noticing hints of anger, Han Li unabashedly began to praise Li Feiyu.

"It is not so simple, but to think that I actually managed to make our 'Great Genius Han' sing songs of praises." Li Feiyu smiled as he teased Han Li.

"What genius? I'm always defeated by you after a few moves."

"Heng! That was because I used my True Qi to execute my techniques. There is nothing to boast of. If I did not use my True Qi, i'm afraid that I would definitely lose to you within a hundred moves."

"Is there even anyone who doesn't use their True Qi when fighting? Senior Disciple Li is too humble."

"Humble? I'm not humble at all! You did not start learning martial arts until recently and had never sparred with anyone before. The only thing you learned was some useless oracular formula. To think that within such a short span of time, you have already comprehended the intricacies of each martial technique that i thought you. If you are not a genius, then who is? That oracular formula seems to have no effect on increasing your might, so why are you still assiduously practicing it every day?"

Han Li bitterly smiled to himself as he thought, "You think that I want to learn this? Right now, I might as well be riding on top of a tiger. Even if want to stop practicing it, Doctor Mo wouldn't let me."

“Junior Disciple Han, I’m not saying this just for the sake of talking. Based on the talent you displayed this past half a year, I know that you have great potential. I strongly urge that you discard the stupid oracular formula and concentrate on learning martial arts techniques with me. I dare to guarantee that you would only need a span of two years to become strong enough to everyone. I have no doubts that after two years, both you and I will dominate the Seven Mysteries Sect!” Li Feiyu tried persuading him.

Han Li felt somewhat moved in his heart. Although Li Feiyu had said these words many times, making Han Li feel irritated, the senior disciple did have some good points. Not only that, Li Feiyu sincerely cared for Han Li’s future.

Han Li shook his head, showing his rejection of the idea, and quickly changed the topic.

“In the Seven Supreme Division, are there any supreme martial arts techniques that restrict opponents without consuming True Qi?”

Li Feiyu, seeing how quickly Han Li changed the topic, stopped trying to persuade him. He didn’t want to force Han Li since he knew that Han Li was the same as him: a keeper of a secret that he wanted to keep hidden.

Li Feiyu lowered his head to ponder before mentioning, “There is indeed a strange sword technique that does not require True Qi to execute, but...”

“But what?” The moment Han Li heard that there was a technique he could use, he was overjoyed and quickly asked for more information.

“This particular set of sword techniques has been passed down in the Seven Supreme division for over a hundred years, but there has never been a disciple who was able to successfully master it. Even the Elder who created this technique passed away before mastering. This technique is known as the Blinking Sword Art. Don’t you think that the name for this technique is bizarre?”

Chapter 34: Blinking Sword Art

“Blinking Sword Art?” Han Li murmured.

“That’s right! What do you think this set of sword techniques has in common with eyes blinking? Isn’t the name funny?”

“Have you practiced this set of sword techniques before?” Han Li asked curiously.

“Of course not. Who would practice such a useless set of sword arts? It’s all form and no power. Ever since this sword technique was created, no one has chosen to practice it, let alone me, Senior Disciple Li.”

“I was told that if the creator of this set of sword techniques hadn’t saved the Sect Leader’s life countless times and left a will for it to be placed inside the Seven Supreme Division, the Seven Supreme Division wouldn’t have even considered storing this type of swordplay.”

With his cold countenance, Li Feiyu was someone whom Han Li would never have thought of as a big mouth. Who would have thought that Li Feiyu would list all of the techniques and stances for this particular sword art before Han Li opened his mouth to speak. Li Feiyu would only act in this manner when privately facing Han Li. In the presence of a disciple other than Han Li, he would revert back to the cool Senior Disciple Li who was revered by every other disciple.

After hearing Li Feiyu speak, Han Li’s intuition told him that this was the technique he was looking for.

“Senior Disciple Li, could you copy this set of sword techniques from the Seven Supreme Division and bring it to me?”

“Hehe! No problem! If you were to ask about any other martial arts, I might not be able to guarantee success since there would be people guarding it. But as for the Blinking Sword Art, you can count on me. However, copying it is too much of a hassle, so I will just steal the original book for you. Once you record the techniques listed down, just give it back to me, and I will stealthily return it to its original location.

This way, no one would notice its absence.” Li Feiyu nonchalantly made a bold suggestion.

Han Li felt that Li Feiyu was very confident about this, and as such, agreed to his suggestion.

Initially, Han Li was concerned that Li Feiyu might accidentally overlook or miss a portion of the technique when copying it down, but since he wanted to steal the original copy of the technique, Han Li could be more at ease.

“It’s getting late. I should go back and practice my martial arts. If not, the Seven Supreme Division might discovered that I sneaked out.” Li Feiyu dried his body and donned his clothes in preparation to leave Han Li’s secluded mountain hideout.

Before Li Feiyu left, Han Li reminded him to be cautious when stealing the sword technique manual.

After Li Feiyu left, Han Li returned back to God Hand Valley as well.

Upon stepping inside the valley, Han Li could see the mysterious figure that Doctor Mo bought back from afar, standing motionlessly as a guard outside of Doctor Mo’s residence. It was as if the summer heat did not affect him in the slightest way.

Han Li, as he neared to the entrance of his own residence, halted his steps and glanced at the silent, mysterious man guarding Doctor Mo’s doorstep.

Ever since Doctor Mo threatened him, Han Li had felt an extreme interest regarding what the mysterious figure looked like underneath his hood. Han Li had never heard him speak a single word after arriving at the valley, causing him to wonder if the man had been mute since birth.

What was even more surprising was that this mysterious man seemed to have an elephant constitution; he could silently stand on guard for an entire day without being exhausted. In Han Li’s heart, only the word “freak” could be used to describe this mysterious figure.

He had once tried to communicate with this man, but the mysterious

figure was akin to a block of wood, eliciting no response no matter what Han Li said to him.

Han Li truly felt that Doctor Mo was amazing for being able to train a person to an extent where the person became similar to a puppet. The mysterious figure had no weaknesses or emotions. In addition, it was equipped with herculean strength and was completely obedient to Doctor Mo's orders. This was Han Li's judgement regarding the mysterious man Doctor Mo brought back from his travels.

Han Li knew that this mysterious man could very well be used by Doctor Mo to suppress him in the future, but despite of this, he was unable to find a solution or a weakness to exploit.

The only thing that aroused Han Li's suspicion was that he could vaguely feel a sense of familiarity whenever he viewed the mysterious man's back; it was as if he had encountered this man somewhere before. However, no matter how hard he pondered, he could not recall why this man's back seemed so familiar to him.

After a while, Han Li let out a sigh and he closed his door. Returning back to his residence, he knew that unless Doctor Mo gave a different order, the mysterious man would likely continue standing on guard without resting.

Feeling slightly confused in his heart, Han Li decided not to worry anymore and jumped onto his bed, laying his head on his interlocked fingers. On his bed, Han Li slowly closed his eyes as he tried to organize his thoughts and memories of the events that had transpired today. He repeatedly dissected and analysed the techniques that Senior Disciple Li taught him until he could grasp the essence behind them.

This was an effect of Han Li's fifth stage of cultivation in the Eternal Spring Arts: Eidetic Memory!

Taking full advantage of his Eidetic Memory, Han Li crammed as many martial arts techniques as he could get hold of into his brain, analysing them over and over. His Eidetic Memory was what caused Li Feiyu to call him a genius.

Two months ago, Han Li had used medicine that he concocted to forcefully break into the fifth stage of the Eternal Spring Arts!

Both the Yellow Dragon Pellet as well as the Gold Essence Pill had incredibly strong medical effects that widely surpassed Han Li's estimation. These two concocted pills could be considered priceless treasures!

However, he had already consumed over half of his stock. From what left, Han Li estimated that it should be barely enough for him to breakthrough to the sixth stage of the Eternal Spring Arts. Rubbing his hands in glee, he wondered what surprises the sixth stage of the Eternal Spring Arts had in store for him.

There was only half a year left until Doctor Mo's time limit. Although Han Li had learned some martial arts from Li Feiyu, he was unable to combine the martial arts techniques with his True Qi. He could at most display the forms, but he could not manifest the true might behind the martial arts techniques he learned from Li Feiyu.

Against clumsy and weak people, it was more than enough to deal with them. However, if he wanted to fight against Doctor Mo with such low level skills, it would be very laughable. It was the same as hitting a dog with a meat bun, producing no effects at all.

Just thinking about this caused worry to arise in Han Li's heart. How troublesome; the Eternal Spring Arts enhanced his body in multiple ways but it couldn't be used for battle or slaughter!

Now, it seemed like he could only depend on the Blinking Sword Art, hoping that it would create a miracle and give him a chance to survive whatever ordeal would take place.

Chapter 35: Theft of Secret Manuals

On an afternoon ten days after their agreement, Han Li sneaked out of God Hand Valley in order to meet Li Feiyu.

In actuality, Han Li couldn't have snuck out even if he tried. Doctor Mo was aware of Han Li's every movement and simply let Han Li move with unrestricted freedom.

The amount of freedom he was granted initially caused Han Li to be suspicious of Doctor Mo's intentions, but after leaving the valley several times without detecting any signs of his movements being tracked, Han Li began to feel relieved. Reassured, he continued to carry out his own plans within God Hand Valley.

After a long period of deliberation, Han Li gradually deduced the reason why Doctor Mo granted him so much freedom: Doctor Mo had been patient and accommodated Han Li's needs because it was in his best interest to do so.

Although Doctor Mo used his two trumpcards, the Insect Corpse Pill as well as the lives of his family, to threaten Han Li, he knew that such methods would not be able to fully control his disciple. Han Li would only feel vengeance in his heart, thus causing his cultivation progress to be half-hearted. Therefore, if Doctor Mo did not restrict Han Li's freedom, Han Li would no longer feel as oppressed or have a shadow over his heart. After all, even though Doctor Mo wanted Han Li to cultivate the Eternal Spring Arts, there was no way he could tie Han Li up and forced him to cultivate at knifepoint.

After Han Li deduced the reason, his guts got bigger and bigger. In the past, he would try his best to sneak out of the valley, without alerting Doctor Mo. But now, he would just swaggering walk out of the valley.

On the surface, Han Li seemed not to be affected by Doctor Mo's hidden surveillance, but in reality, he was extremely cautious to not reveal what he was scheming..

After he walked out of the valley, Han Li activated his Eternal Spring

Arts, causing his perception to rise to an unearthly level. His heightened perception could accurately register any living being within a radius of 10 zhang.

(TL: 1 zhang = 10 chi, or 3.58 meters)

Han Li believed that even if Doctor Mo was secretly watching him, there was no way Doctor Mo could escape from being detected.

Although Han Li knew that it was impossible for him to win in a direct confrontation against Doctor Mo, he was confident that his five senses surpassed Doctor Mo's own senses.

After walking for some time, Han Li cautiously entered their previous hiding spot where he and Li Feiyu had enjoyed the refreshing bath earlier.

The moment he entered, Han Li noticed that Li Feiyu had already arrived and was sitting next to the pond.

Li Feiyu had lowered his head, observing his bare legs soaking in the cooling water pond. "Pu tong" "Pu tong" He kicked his legs above the surface of the water, causing the pond to be disturbed by small waves. Li Feiyu lost himself in the excitement of his unusually childish actions.

When Li Feiyu heard the sound of Han Li entering, he did not even turn his head and complained straight away. "Junior Disciple Han, you are getting more and more late to our meetings, making me wait more than half a day every time. Can't you try to arrive earlier?"

"Sorry, I..." Han Li flicked the mud stains off his robes as he tried to explain more.

"Catch this."

Li Feiyu did not wait for Han Li to finish his explanations before tossing a large bundle towards him.

"What is this? Is this something delicious?" Han Li asked, but after grabbing the bundle, he could feel the hard and unyielding objects stored inside. They didn't seem like food that could be eaten.

"You only know how to eat! Didn't you want me to get for you the

manual for Blinking Sword Art?” Li Feiyu glared at Han Li.

“What? This is a sword manual? Are you sure you are not mistaken? Did you accidentally grab a stone from your backyard?” Han Li hoist up the huge bundle. An expression of disbelief could be seen in his face.

“So heavy!” Han Li exerted his strength to hoist the bundle, but it was so heavy that he fell over.

“HAHA!” Li Feiyu began to laugh wildly, unable to suppress it any longer. He rolled on the ground, laughing his ass off in childish glee.

Han Li suspiciously glanced at Li Feiyu before staring at the huge bundle once again.

“Peng!”

A sound rang out as he kicked the huge bundle. It seemed like there really was a book wrapped inside.

No longer paying attention to Li Feiyu, squatted besides the large bundle and used his hands to feel what was inside.

He quickly stopped. Wasting time to guess the contents of the bundle was an extremely foolish action.

A pair of clean, white palms grasped the complicated knot of the bundle. Using all of his fingers, he forced the knot open.

“PaPow!”

The crisp sound of clapping hands rang out.

Han Li did not immediately opened the bundle. Instead, he turned his head and stared at his “evil”, laughing friend, Li Feiyu.

It was unknown when, but Li Feiyu had already stopped laughing and put on his shoes.

Currently, he was furiously clapping his hands while cheering for Han Li, oblivious to the pain from his red-tinged palms.

“Excellent! Every time I see you execute the ‘Silk Wrapping Palms’, I find it incredible. That technique seems to have been designed for you

alone! Since the time that I taught to you, only a span of two months has passed.” Li Feiyu continued clapping his hands and praising Han Li.

“Don’t tell me that in order to see me demonstrating that technique, you purposely tied a convoluted knot on such a large bundle?” asked Han Li, slightly agitated.

“Of course not. Once you open the bundle, you’ll understand.” Li Feiyu smiling countenance suddenly turned serious.

Curious and bewildered as to why Li Feiyu would suddenly speak with such a tone, Han Li cast his gaze onto the bundle once more.

He deliberated for a moment before stretching his index finger and middle finger, lightly grasping the edge of the item inside the bundle, and dragging the hidden item out in the open.

“This is...” Beads of sweat appeared on Han Li head as his two eyes almost popped out of their socket

“How is it? Are you shocked?” Li Feiyu slowly walked towards Han Li, patting him on his shoulder.

At a loss for words, Han Li stiffly turned his body, and looked straight at Li Feiyu.

“Why are you looking at me with that expression? There’s no way I’ll marry you, alright?” Li Feiyu laughingly teased Han Li.

After hearing Li Feiyu’s words, Han Li cleared his mind.

“I want to make it clear between us! From this moment on, I don’t know you, nor have you met me before.” Han Li’s voice got louder in intensity as he roared furiously.

“I don’t know if my vision is blurry or if you’ve gone insane! You actually stole half of the Seven Supreme Division’s secret manuals?! If you’re discovered, both of us will suffer a fate worse than death!” As he hollered at Li Feiyu, Han Li pointed his finger at the pile of secret manuals in front of him.

On the top left hand corner of the manuals were several characters

written in gold:

“Seven Supreme Division, Secret Library”

Chapter 36: Shocked

Seeing that Han Li became furious, Li Feiyu did not get angry. Instead, Li Feiyu remained indifferent.

He tilted his head, stuck his pinky into his ear, and concentrated on cleaning his ear. Han Li's reaction was an appropriate and expected one.

After Han Li had vented his anger, he saw that Li Feiyu remained as brazen as a city wall, almost as if he had not heard any of Han Li's remarks. Han Li calmed down, sensing that something was off.

"You are not a fool, nor are you an egomaniac. You wouldn't do anything that would get yourself killed. You must tell me what your reason was behind such a reckless action right now," Han Li gravely demanded.

Li Feiyu, seeing that Han Li's anger was quickly being replaced once again by reason, felt somewhat regretful. He assumed a wronged and pitiful appearance and repeatedly complained of this injustice by shouting, "Heavens! I'm being wrongly accused!"

"A moment ago, I was actually about to give you an explanation, but you didn't even give me a chance to open my mouth!"

"Now you're complaining about me, am I truly no longer a person in your eyes!?"

This kind of whining was obviously fake. Anyone who took a quick glance at this farce would feel annoyed after seeing through the act.

Han Li also could not help but think of taking advantage of the situation and stepped forward, fiercely kicking Li Feiyu, who was resembling a sh!t-eating dog.

"Give me less acting and more explaining. Quickly!"

"You scoundrel. If the junior disciples that admire you see your lazy appearance, your image as a powerful and confident fighter would be completely shattered." Han Li gave him a bit of a mocking expression.

Han Li currently had no time to vent his anger and argue with Li Feiyu.

If this secret exchange was not handled well, the two of them would face enormous consequences.

Li Feiyu seemed to realize what Han Li was thinking at this moment and no longer ridiculed or denounced him. Rather, he lazily walked over to the bundle and picked up a rare book.

After standing up straight, his face had a mysterious radiance. With a smile that was simultaneously not a genuine smile, he handed the book over to Han Li. Afterwards, signalling with his eyes, Li Feiyu beckoned Han Li to look at the book's cover.

Han Li reached out with his hand to receive the very thin and rare book, giving Li Feiyu a look filled with doubt.

He was at a bit of a loss, not knowing what sort of crafty scheme Li Feiyu was plotting.

“Open it and take a look for yourself. If you do, you’ll understand everything.” Li Feiyu deliberately used a mysterious tone in order to coax Han Li into examining the book.

“What, you can’t say it outright? What’s the point of trying to keep it a mystery?”

Although hesitation was evident on Han Li’s face, he flipped through the pages of the book.

He opened the cover, revealing the first page of the rare manual. The top of the page, neatly written in black and white, were three large words: “Blinking Sword Art”.

“En!” Han Li was slightly astounded.

Han Li was astonished that the first book Li Feiyu had given to him was exactly what he desired.

“Don’t lose your focus. Come and see the rest of the books.” Li Feiyu tossed over a few nearby rare manuals in succession.

Han Li caught the books one by one and was completely stunned after quickly skimming through their entirety..

All of their titles were clearly written with black and white characters: “Blinking Sword Art”.

Only after a long while had passed did Han Li lift his gaze from the books in his hands.

Pointing his finger at the large pile of secret manuals on the ground, Han Li asked stammeringly, “You... you cannot possibly tell me... that these.... these... these are all manuals for “Blinking Sword Art”!

“I am very sorry, Junior Disciple Han. You have indeed guessed correctly.” Li Feiyu shrugged his shoulders and spread his hands; his face wearing an expression of helplessness.

Although Li Feiyu seemed apologetic, his feelings did not coincide with his words. The corner of his mouth rose faintly as he derived pleasure from Han Li’s frustration.

“This is impossible! There are almost a hundred books here, so how could all of these possibly be manuals for Blinking Sword Art?” Unable to stomach Li Feiyu’s cheap tricks, Han Li questioned Li Feiyu because he was filled with great doubt.

“You’re asking me? Who was I even supposed ask in order to verify that they were the right manuals without getting caught?”

“I was at the corner of the Seven Supreme Division’s library when I suddenly came upon so many rare manuals sharing the same name. I, too, was shocked!” Li Feiyu rolled his eyes and mumbled to himself, giving off the appearance of having lingering trauma.

Soon after, he saw Han Li’s dumbfounded expression and couldn’t help but laugh heartily.

Li Feiyu would later say that seeing Han Li suffer such a shock was indeed a rare and impressive sight.

Ordinarily, Han Li’s face was always calm and composed, as if he always had a card up his sleeve. For Han Li to be shocked was near impossible.

At this moment, Han Li had such a numb, foolish look that made Li Feiyu feel that these past few days had been well worth the taxing effort.

After a moment, Han Li had at last cleared his mind.

He tightly grabbed several books with his hands and lowered his head, deep in thought. Then, with a thought, he looked up and asked neither slowly nor rushed, "Did you count how many manuals were in the bundle?"

"In total, how many manuals did you bring?" Han Li once again asked.

"Naturally, I counted the manuals multiple times. Altogether, there are seventy four books, all with the same name." Li Feiyu immediately replied, without any hesitation.

"If we don't know the exact quantity of manuals and fail to return one or two books, we might draw ourselves unwanted attention, which might prove troublesome," Han Li immediately explained.

He softly pinched the somewhat yellow pages, slowly turning them over as he carefully skimmed one of the secret manuals in his hand.

Chapter 37: Three Restrictions for Cultivation

The crisp sound of pages flipping was pleasant to Han Li's ears.

However, Li Feiyu hated that sound.

He ignored Han Li, who was concentrating on reading, and walked towards the mountain spring. He pulled out a long saber from the mud and started practicing.

Han Li glanced over at him. Seeing his friend's overwhelming energy, Han Li stopped paying attention at Li Feiyu's movements and shifted his concentration back to the book in his hands.

Han Li could read at a shocking speed of ten lines per glance. He quickly finished the thick book and grabbed another book without even lifting his head to look.

He kept his eyes partly closed while reading, showing a pensive expression from time to time. His eyes were glued to the book's pages and unwilling to detach themselves for just a single moment. The way that his head followed his gaze and moved back and forth gave him the appearance of an elegant intellectual.

As time flew by, Han Li rapidly browsed through the Blinking Sword Art's many manuals.

When he finished reading the eleventh manual, he suddenly stopped and threw the book back in his bag.

He closed his eyes to rest for a little bit.

Once he felt better, he sat down cross-legged and started cultivating the Eternal Spring Arts, striving to comprehend all the information he had just read.

Han Li's facial expression shifted back and forth from excited and lively to serious and dispirited.

Not knowing how much time had passed, Han Li finally opened his eyes

and was shocked by what he saw in front of him.

He didn't realize that Li Feiyu had sneaked up so close to his face while his eyes had been closed. Li Feiyu was in such close proximity that their noses had almost touched.

"What are you doing? Aren't you supposed to be practicing with your saber?"

"Junior Disciple Han, can't see you what time it is right now? You're asking a stupid question." Li Feiyu pulled back his body and twitched his lips.

Han Li realized just then that the sunlight had dimmed.

He lifted his head and looked up. The sky was currently a blueish-grey colour, which meant that it was already evening.

"Cough! Time has really flown by while I was cultivating. I didn't notice that it was this late already."

Han Li stood up and moved around a little bit.

"So? Did you find anything interesting in the book?" Li Feiyu looked at Han Li passionately, hoping that Han Li could tell him about the Blinking Sword Art.

"Hmm, it's not bad. I think this technique will suit me."

"Huh?! What do you mean 'not bad'?" Tell me the actual truth," said Li Feiyu in a slightly dissatisfied tone.

"Specifically, these rare books are a combination of different techniques. In other words, there is no full set in here. They have all been pieced together from different martial arts styles," Han Li slowly explained.

"Then what is the meaning of the name 'Blinking Sword Art? Is it even an actual sword art? Why is the name so strange?" Li Feiyu was still unsatisfied by Han Li's response, so he kept asking questions.

"Blinking Sword Art actually exists, but the manuals that pertain to it are only a small portion within the big mash up," Han Li said with

patience.

“As for the name of the Blinking Sword Art, there is a special reason for it.”

“What reason? Why can’t you say it all at once? Stop talking sentence by sentence, you are just like the old people in town.” Li Feiyu glared at Han Li; he couldn’t stand Han Li’s slow explanation.

At Li Feiyu’s urging, Han Li couldn’t do anything else but speed up his clarification.

“According to the books, this sword art manipulates light to affect the opponent’s eyesight, thereby giving the user a chance to land a decisive blow. It often makes your opponents lose their lives the moment they blink, hence the name ‘Blinking Sword Art’.”

“There is actually such a strange sword art? There are quite a few eccentric martial artists in this world!” Li Feiyu showed a lot of interest after listening, but quieted right after Han Li’s next sentence.

“This sword art has three restrictions. It cannot be practiced by those have cultivated True Qi, those who lack perseverance, or lastly, those without talent.”

When Li Feiyu heard the first requirement, he immediately gave up on cultivating the sword art. His True Qi was already at trained to a formidable stage. There was no way that he would be willing to disable his own internal strength to practice this new skill, which he knew next to nothing about.

Since he had completely lost interest in the rare books, Li Feiyu didn’t want to stay there any longer.

He stood up and was getting ready to leave, but before he left, he warned Han Li to copy the rare books as soon as possible so he could bring back all the original copies when they next met. Even though these rare books weren’t valued very much by other people, but if they disappear for a long time, it would still attract attention.

Not long after Li Feiyu left, Han Li left the place as well.

The whole landscape of the mountainous region was covered by layers of fog, causing it to be slightly dark. A forest of thistles grew on both sides of the narrow mountain paths. When a gust of mountain wind blew through the forest, a “hua lala” sound would be emitted. The leaves on the branches on both side of the path would flutter about frenziedly, akin to bared fangs and dancing claws.

On the somewhat seemingly sinister mountain road, Han Li rushed toward God Hand Valley.

Because he left mountain when the sun was beginning to dim, the sky was completely dark by the time he walked halfway to the valley.

If it hadn't been for his Eternal Spring Arts, which sharpened his night vision, Han Li wouldn't have been able to rush down the mountain in this dark environment. After all, this small road was not well tread. The road was filled with dangerously placed twists and turns. If one were not careful, an accident was likely to occur, thereby claiming his or her fragile life.

Chapter 38: Encountering a Midnight Spy

Walking in the pitch black forest, Han Li heightened his senses. Ordinary humans wouldn't be able to clearly see the path in front of them, but for Han Li, it was as clear as day.

Despite his advantage, Han Li continued to be cautious. His caution was not honed by hunting ferocious wild beasts, but rather developed into a habit by hiding from Doctor Mo.

After the Seven Mysteries Sect relocated to the Rainbow Celestial Mountains, the beasts and creatures inhabiting the mountains and forests were eradicated in order to ensure the safety of the sect members. In addition to the ferocious beasts, even normal wild animals, such as the venomous snakes, had been hunted and turned into food for the disciples.

Han Li's vigilance was not a part of his natural personality. He had developed it after experiencing Doctor Mo's schemes so that he could prevent any unwanted dangers.

The mountain's bone-chilling wind got stronger and stronger, giving off a shrill sound that caused his hair to stand on end. The distant Han Li, upon sensing the wind, hastened his pace as he stepped across the boundary that marked the edge of the forest.

He lightly sighed. Walking alone in this pitch dark made his heart grow heavy. Han Li quickened his pace once more, increasing his stride in order to leave the forest as soon as possible. All of a sudden, a strong gust of wind blew towards him.

After enduring the strong gust of wind, Han Li paused as if he had discovered something bizarre. He furrowed his brows and tilted his neck, as if he was trying to listen for something.

Han Li's expression quickly turned serious. He heard the sound of footsteps echoing in the distance. Although the footsteps were extremely light and the owners of the footsteps were far away from him, Han Li could determine that there were two individuals rushing closer towards his direction.

He lightly lept away and hid himself in the forest next to the mountain path without making a single sound.

There was a large tree about ten Zhang away from the path. Han Li hid himself behind the tree, curling himself into a ball. If one were to examine the tree from the front, he or she would not be able to find any traces of Han Li.

It was only after finding a good hiding spot that Han Li gradually began to calm down.

This time, Han Li was not being overly sensitive; there was something truly strange going on. It was highly illogical for two people to prowl around a remote location in the middle of the night. Han Li was eighty percent positive that the two mysterious figures were hiding something fishy up their sleeves.

Han Li did not want the mysterious figures to kill him for discovering their secret, even if he did so by accident.

However, if there were no dangers facing Han Li, then there would be no problem for him to eavesdrop on their secrets. Han Li was no hypocrite; he merely understood that if good fortune delivered itself to his doorstep, he would be a fool not to take advantage of it.

“...Descending the mountains... arrange well....time..people....Commander....”

Waves of low-sounding voices drifted over from far away. At this moment, the mountain wind was blowing extremely strongly. As a result, most of the words had been scattered by the wind, leaving only a small portion of the conversation that made its way into Han Li's ears.

Han Li was astounded to think that he had managed to discover a portion of their secret. In this region, the only person with the title of Commander was the “Golden Wolf” Jia Tianlong from the Feral Wolf Gang. This person had great enmity with the Seven Mysteries Sect. Now that Han Li had eard his name in this remote location, it provided much food for thought.

Jia Tianlong was a ruthless, blood-drinking demonic figure in the eyes of the Seven Mysteries Sect's disciples. Rumors told that he was a broad-shouldered man with a fat waist, long teeth, and a livid face. He supposedly ate human flesh and drank human blood three times a day. Many of the Seven Mysteries Sect's junior disciples were frightened out of their wits just by hearing the rumors of such a devilish figure.

However, according to Li Feiyu, the rumors were far from the truth. Contrary to the rumors, Jia Tianlong was skinny and weak with exquisite facial features. He was quite young, in his early thirties. The rumors regarding how he ruthlessly killed people, however, were true. Jia Tianlong could not be judged by his appearance. After all, based on his facial features alone, no one would expect him to be able to control the other members of the gang.

Han Li gathered his thoughts as he tried to remember all that he knew about Jia Tianlong. Sucking in a cold breath, he curled up even tighter, trying to lower the sound of his breathing.

“...this time.... steal....list of names....kill....”

Another part of the conversation drifted over, clearer than before. The two mysterious figures were getting closer and closer to Han Li

Han Li did not even dare to breathe loudly. He knew that if he were to be discovered now, only death would await him. The two of them were likely spies from the Feral Wolf Gang, and they would definitely not let an outsider know of their secret.

“...Plan...must...not....quickly...”

Gradually, the voices of these two mysterious figures got even lower. It seemed like they had reached the crux of their discussion, which meant that they were about to reveal the most crucial information.

After a short moment, the voices got louder again, but Han Li could not hear them clearly; he could only hear the sound of the mountain wind blowing through. The outlines of these two mysterious figures passed by Han Li and gradually disappeared into the distance.

Han Li still did not dare to make any movements for a long period of time. Only after activating the Eternal Spring Arts and determining that there was no one near him in a ten Zhang radius did he slowly reveal himself.

This time around, he had avoided certain death. Luckily for him, he managed to discover the movements of these two spies early on. If Han Li had met them face to face, he would surely have been killed to protect their secret. Even worse, based on his own martial skills, he did not even have a single shred of hope that he would survive such a confrontation.

Han Li stood motionlessly at the same location. Lost in his thoughts, his fingers lightly rubbed his chin while he gazed at the direction where the two spies had disappeared.

From the fragments of the secret conversation he heard, he could gauge that in the near future, the Feral Wolf Gang would undertake some action that would prove greatly detrimental to the Seven Mysteries Sect. There was a high probability that this action would have a close connection with the “list of names” that was previously mentioned.

What surprised him the most was that Han Li had already identified the identity of one of the figures despite of not being able to see their facial features. Even though the two mysterious figures had not spoken much, Han Li could match one of their low voices to the kitchen steward on the mountain of the Seven Mysteries Sect.

The steward, who had sold rabbits to Han Li back then, gave him a low impression. He had a mustache and an ignorant face, and he loved to take advantage of others. To think that he was actually a spy from the Feral Wolf Gang once again reminded Han Li that one could never be too cautious.

But reflecting back upon it, this was something to be expected. Only with a position such as a kitchen steward could a spy been able to enter and leave the mountains and pass along any news that he or she had obtained without arousing any suspicions.

Chapter 39: Abnormal Requirements

However, Han Li was quite unfamiliar with the voice of the other spy. He must have never met this person before. However, judging from the spy's voice, his age must be relatively young, around 20 years old.

Unfortunately, in order to insure his own safety, Han Li didn't dare to steal a glance. He feared that these two men practiced martial skills that could detect his spying gaze, enabling them to be aware of nearby outsiders. The potential gains were not worth the potential losses.

After this slightly dangerous event, the trip after became quite safe.

Han Li finally returned home after his regular supper time.

As always, Doctor Mo mysteriously paid him a visit and gave him a glance that lacked any interest. Aside from delivering a few concocted medicines, he normally left Han Li to do as he wished.

Han Li seemed as if he had not noticed the medicines that Doctor Mo had delivered. They were all created from rare medicinal ingredients that were gathered from his previous expedition away from the mountain. Han Li believed that Doctor Mo had abandoned his expectations of him and had some other malevolent scheme prepared.

For now, Han Li completely disregarded the precious medicine Doctor Mo had delivered. But in order to avoid raising suspicion from Doctor Mo, he pinched his nose and swallowed it down.

He threw away any suspicion that the medicines were laced with poison. Currently, any harm Doctor Mo inflicted onto Han Li would only be hurting himself.

With regards to seeing the Feral Wolf Gang spies, Han Li thought of the best method to deal with them on the way back to his residence.

Although he wasn't deeply passionate towards the Seven Mysteries Sect, he was halfway to becoming an Inner Disciple. How could he possibly be impartial toward a harmful affair toward the Seven Mysteries Sect before his eyes and ignore it completely?

He had long thought of a best candidate to handle this matter—Li Feiyu, the famous Senior Disciple Li.

According to Han Li's observation, perhaps the reason Li Feiyu consumed the Essence Extraction Pill was because he greatly valued being in the center of attention far greater than a common man and possessed no small amount of ambition. He had always dreamed of entering the upper divisions of the Seven Mysteries Sect, further becoming the focus of attention.

Han Li had previously suspected that Li Feiyu probably thought he was in the last stage of his life, and thus he became even more frantic and hungry for fame.

If Han Li allowed Li Feiyu to perform a large contribution to the Seven Mysteries Sect, Li Feiyu would certainly be excited to no end. This way, Han Li would be able repay Li Feiyu for stealing the sword manuals.

Thinking of the Blinking Sword Art, Han Li felt a wave of emotion.

Han Li did not tell any lies regarding the Blinking Sword Art to his good friend. This sword art truly did not suit Li Feiyu. However, Han Li did not reveal many of the details.

An essential rule of survival was that one should always keep a few secrets, regardless of who they were being kept from.

Although Li Feiyu and Han Li seemed to have a close relationship, it was hardly exceptional.

However, the contents written in these secret manuals were quite different from common martial teachings.

It seemed to Han Li that, rather than to say it was a sword art, it would be more appropriate to call it sword ingenuity. It was a complete integration of weather, timing, favorable positioning, and secretive assassination techniques against all kinds of factors and people; such a skill was rarely seen. It was pure killing skill; as soon as the sword was drawn, death approached.

These books described different environments, times of day, and the

utilization of diligently practiced secretive sword skills. There were all kinds of sure-kill techniques that would cut down an enemy in a single strike.

The manuals taught those that learned these sword skills to make use of every tree and strand of grass in the terrain, as well as light rays of all intensities and angles, in order to hinder the opponent's vision. During the split second the opponent was weakened, the user would take advantage of it and kill them in an instant.

This was a mysterious technique that required much attention and skill to execute. Without the slightest talent, it would be impossible to understand this sword art.

Therefore, those who learned this mysterious technique must excel in the five senses. Their vision and hearing must far exceed that of an ordinary person by many levels if there were to be the promise of even the slightest results.

Even if they had the requirements to achieve that stage, there would inevitably be a few disciples who would covet the Blinking Sword Art's formidable power and choose to cultivate it immediately after reaching the minimum requirement.

However, mastering the sword art required an excessive amount of effort. In addition, it had even harsher requirements. Those who cultivated this mysterious technique could not possess pure inner strength. Otherwise, their body would suffer from complications when trying to execute the technique. This made cultivating the sword art quite difficult.

Even if someone with True Qi was lucky enough to succeed, if the True Qi in their body became too vigorous during actual combat, the sword maneuvers would unwittingly produce deformations. These deformities left large gaps for the opponent to take advantage of, thereby causing life-threatening calamities.

These requirements basically severed away the majority of those attempting to cultivate the technique. In Jiang Hu there was a common

saying: “To practice the fist and neglect skill will end with one’s effort in futility.”

To not practice inner strength was an enormous taboo. Anyone who would abandon their cultivation of True Qi and spread their name with ineffable sword swordplay would truly be the laughingstock of Jiang Hu.

Therefore, only the remaining few still had the intention to continue cultivating the technique.

However, even if those individuals had plenty of talent and had no problem with abandoning True Qi, the final difficult barrier would thoroughly dispel their intentions of continuing down this path.

The final obstacle was the excessively complex nature of the Blinking Sword Art and the painstaking memorization of the meticulous conditions in which each of the sword maneuvers within the sword manuals could be applied.

Seeing such a large pile of thick secret manuals would intimidate any average person at first glance.

Each sword manual represented a sword maneuver, and each sword maneuver could be broken into hundreds of sword forms. Every sword form must be carefully selected for different environments and different times of day. To fully master the Blinking Sword Arts, one had to make complete use of different techniques for every situation.

The tremendous quantity of sword skills, let alone cultivation, could make one’s head ache. Not to mention that this further required the complete memorization and comprehension of every sword maneuver and sword form.

The previously mentioned abnormal requirements have obstructed an innumerable number of motivated disciples, making them endlessly curse in their heart at the Elder who had established this sword art.

With the passage of time, the Seven Mysteries Sect gradually lost interest in this sword technique. Believing it impossible for someone to train in this martial technique, many disciples thought that the Elder had

baselessly and casually fabricated these martial teachings as he was facing death's door. Otherwise, why would there be these excessive requirements? This was deliberately designed to be difficult for disciples that were unaware of how things stood. As a result, these secret manuals were put away on a shelf, no longer catching anyone's interest.

Chapter 40: Origin of the Secret Technique

Those who complained did not know that the Elder who created this particular sword art had a very deep and profound level of skill. However, his meridians were injured during a battle against another cultivator of Jiang Hu. As such, he had been unable to cultivate True Qi.

In order to protect his status in the sect, the Elder had kept the matter a secret. From then on, he acted mysteriously, pretending that he had overwhelming strength to deceive all of the members in the sect.

Ever since then, however, it had been undeniable that he lacked the ability to protect himself. He had to rely on wit and experience from that moment on, protecting himself through deception.

That era was when the Seven Mysteries Sect stood at the height of its power.

When this Elder realized that his power would never recover, he became depressed and organized many covert raids on the smaller sects. He acted behind his superiors' back by using deceptive schemes that hid his movements.

During the raids, he forcibly seized many secret martial arts manuals, hoping to find a top-level skill that he could cultivate without True Qi.

After many years of research, the Elder did indeed discover many mysterious techniques that didn't require True Qi. However, none of them suited him.

He was greatly depressed.

However, this Elder had talent and intelligence that far surpassed the norm. Suffering from depression and frustration, he decided to combine all the unfathomable martial techniques that he had discovered, thus creating his own set of top-tier skills.

Once the notion appeared in his mind, he was fully obsessed by it. He

intended to create a special set of technique unique to himself. This was something that all martial artists aspired to do. With his full attention and effort, he threw himself wholeheartedly into research. Eventually, fearing distractions, he entered into closed-door meditation and did not bother himself with matters of the sect..

Creating a set of skills was an extremely difficult thing to do. Not to mention the fact that the skill he intended to create had to be a top-tier skill that did not require True Qi to execute.

Creating this unprecedented martial skill was a process filled with many hardships that vastly surpassed his expectations. However, his determination and willpower was beyond that of a normal human. After half a lifetime's worth of efforts that he expended over the course of ten years, he finally created his skill--Blinking Sword Art

That Elder was extremely excited, spreading the joyous news to his sect members. However, he discovered that the Seven Mysteries Sect had regressed tremendously, now a shadow of its former self. It had been attacked and surrounded by an alliance of various sects. The Seven Mysteries Sect could be wiped out at any moment.

The Elder was furious and alarmed upon hearing the news. Using the skill he had just created, he unleashed a divine might, killing many top tier opponents and terrifying the rest that remained. Under the encirclement of the various sects, he managed to slaughter a bloody path out to safety, creating immense merit for the Seven Mysteries Sect.

Regretfully, although the sect managed to avert the disaster, the Elder was at the brink of death. He could only pass on his newly created skill and place it in the Seven Supreme Hall, leaving it behind for the other disciples before he passed away.

What was even more regretful was that, even after all this years, none of the following generations had managed to successfully cultivate this particular skill other than Han Li. As a result, this bright pearl was hidden under the dust, never to see the light of the sun.

Han Li had no idea of the history behind the Blinking Sword Art. Even if

he knew, he would not be moved. To him, as long as this particular sword art could allow him to protect his own life when he clashed against Doctor Mo, it was already sufficient. Why care about its history? Its creation process? Han Li had no interest in such mundane details. He was a practical man, Han Li would not be interested in spending his time and energy to understand things that had no benefits to him.

In his own residence, Han Li lit an oil lamp as he laid in front of the table. He repeatedly flipped through the pages of the manual underneath the candlelight.

He had no intentions of copying the manuals. What he was planned to do was to use his Eidetic Memory and memorise all the contents within the secret manuals. This way, he could always have the contents in his mind without arousing suspicions.

Regarding Doctor Mo, Han Li still maintained a high sense of alertness. He was not foolish enough to think that he would be safe because Doctor Mo had slackened his supervision. If Doctor Mo knew about all the secret manuals he had in his residence, wouldn't all his plans come to naught?

Under the dusky yellow light from the lamp, crackling sounds rang out, reminding Han Li that he had been studying for a long time and that it was time for him to get some rest.

However, Han Li had no intention of stopping. He fully immersed himself in the contents of the secret manuals, absorbing all the information they contained into his mind.

As the light popped, a shadow appeared on the wall and began to sway back and forth in the flickering light. Han Li continued to sit there, immersed in the sword manuals, and didn't budge an inch. His body contrasted sharply with this almost demonic shape; however, if one looked closely, he or she would see a sort of harmony between the two.

As time passed, the shadow behind Han Li became fuzzy as it slowly faded away into nothingness. Outside, dawn had broken.

Unknowingly, Han Li had spent an entire night studying.

“Pa”

A soft sound rang out as the light from the lamp died out. Only then did Han Li come to his senses.

He lifted his head and looked at the oil lamp before glancing at the daylight that shone outside his residence. A bitter smile rose from the bottom of his heart.

To think that he had actually spent a day studying and researching killing techniques. He had truly changed from his former self.

Han Li lost himself in contemplation for a moment before standing up and stretching his body, causing cracking sounds to ring out. After doing so, he left his residence and went to collect a basin of cold water from the nearby well in order to wash himself. Han Li activated the Eternal Spring Arts, regaining his energy and causing all the fatigue from the previous night to melt away.

After a whole night of study and research, Han Li already knew that he had to fully understand the principles behind this set of martial arts techniques. If he did not practice it for at least eight to ten years, there was no way he would be able to master it. Even a genius would at least need two or three years in order to yield some results.

Time waits for no one!

Chapter 41: Leaving a Message on a Night's Departure

Han Li didn't have much time left. At most, he had another four to five months before he and Doctor Mo completely revealed their trump cards. Before then, he had no choice but to acquire skills to defend himself.

As a result, he ultimately decided to only cultivate the simpler and easier mysterious techniques that could be used immediately. The more difficult ones would be put to the side temporarily. After he managed to escape the tiger's den, it would not be too late to resume practicing them.

This would greatly cut down his cultivation time, enabling him to quickly and thoroughly master many of simpler secret techniques.

Han Li's mind understood. Even if he could completely master this secret technique, he wouldn't necessarily be Doctor Mo's match.

If Doctor Mo hadn't been lying last time, his strength would be comparable to that of a region's illustrious overlord. Han Li did not know how many ferocious and vicious moves hadn't been exposed during their last counter. He feared that the skills that Doctor Mo had revealed was only a fraction of his true strength.

As Han Li thought of Doctor Mo's monstrous agility, a burst of cold fear entered his mind.

He was well aware that the time he had to learn was short and that any threat he could muster against Doctor Mo would be awfully marginal, almost negligible, but to have his hands tied and allow himself to be manipulated was something Han Li could not allow.

Han Li knew that if he were to raise his hand against Doctor Mo, he would only have one decisive opportunity to seize a victory. Doctor Mo would most likely look down on him. Only by using Doctor Mo's carelessness and negligence against him would Han Li be able to catch him off guard and possibly obtain the opportunity to live.

In the following days, Han Li finished memorizing all of the Blinking

Sword Art manuals. From the manuals, he selected the secret techniques that would be the most useful to him. He began to research them, meditating on the cultivation paths that would yield the quickest results.

He racked his brains for a few days. An entire set of cultivation methods from the manuals were laid out before him. Within this short time period, he was able to complete such a complicated task, making him feel pleased that his efficiency was extraordinary.

During the second half of the month, Han Li handled a few trivial affairs, fully preparing himself by making sure that there was nothing left to worry about.

First of all, he returned the secret manuals to Li Feiyu and took the opportunity to tell him about his encounter with the Feral Wolf Gang's spies as well as the real identity of the kitchen steward.

After Li Feiyu heard this, he was pleasantly surprised. He embraced Han Li's shoulders and repeatedly said, "Good brother" for presenting him with such a great merit without taking any of the credit. This moved him greatly.

However, he didn't know that Han Li's life was currently busy. How could Han Li possibly think about catching a spy? By telling Li Feiyu, Han Li wouldn't have to trouble himself with the matter and would also be currying favor from the senior disciple at little cost to himself. What would Han Li have against this?

Once he finished his business with Li Feiyu, Han Li paid a visit to the sect's most skilled blacksmiths.

He then placed orders for several daggers and secretly requested a few minor modifications. In addition, he ordered a few seemingly useless and obscure items, including several small exquisite iron bells. He also requested that all the items be forged with haste. As a result of his large purchase, Han Li had spent a considerable amount of silver, causing him to feel a slight heartache.

Several days later, Han Li received his order from the blacksmiths. Seeing the shining daggers and small exquisite bells, he was very

satisfied. He showered the blacksmith with praise, knowing that his silver was not spent in vain.

That night, Han Li left his residence and disappeared without a trace. The only thing he left behind was a slip of paper on his bedside with the following words:

Elder Mo,

You need not worry, I did not run away and hide. I merely felt that being with you in the valley was far too stifling to cultivate the Eternal Spring Arts. For this reason, I decided to find a different secluded location in this mountain and enter closed door cultivation. Please be at ease. After four months, I will punctually return and meet with you.

With respect,

Han Li

Reading this out loud while sitting on his armchair, Doctor Mo grabbed the slip of paper in his left hand and quietly looked at it, his face still covered by dark clouds. On the side of the table, there was another note from the blacksmith, detailing Han Li's recent order.

(TL: Doctor Mo had a strange dark cloud on his face when he returned to the valley)

At this moment, Doctor Mo lightly tapped the desk with a finger from his right hand.

“Pupu”

No other sound echoed.

Suddenly, he coldly snorted. The paper in his hand turned to fine ash and drifted into the air.

He stood up unsteadily and paced around the room. Doctor Mo wrinkled his brow in contemplation. After pacing back and forth a few times, he stopped and said to himself, “Little bastard, although I don't know what sly plan you have in mind, you will not escape the palm of my hand regardless of what trick you play. I need you too much to allow that to

happen.”

After he finished speaking, Doctor Mo suddenly turned around and walked to the window. A low and lengthy whistle left his mouth. Immediately after, a small and obscure yellow feathered bird flew into the window. It flew several circles around the room before landing on his shoulder.

A single small bird stood firm. It affectionately rubbed its beak against his face, letting out a melodious “glulu”.

“Alright, I know you’re hungry. Here, it’s your favorite Yellow Chestnut Pill.”

Upon seeing the bird, Doctor Mo’s gloomy face revealed traces of a doting smile. From his pocket, he took out a yellow ball of bird feed and put it into the little bird’s mouth.

“Go. It will be like before. Follow that person diligently. If he leaves the mountain range, return to me immediately.” Doctor Mo spoke to it as if he were talking to a person.

“Glulu.” After finishing its meal, the little bird let out an excited coo and flew around the room. After hearing his words, it left through the window and its figure faded away into the sky.

“Humph! Under the surveillance of the Cloud-Winged Bird, known to travel even faster than a flying arrow, I wonder what tricks you will pull,” he said to himself sinisterly.

“Four months? I will wait for the day of your arrival. It appears that my plan will be a success! Who would dare obstruct my progress? If they obstruct my plans, I will kill them! If a god hinders me, that god will die! If a Buddha hinders me, then that Buddha will die!”

“Hahahaha!” Doctor Mo suddenly laughed wildly, his eyes filled with a crazed expression.

Chapter 42: Cloud-Winged Bird

“You are too full of yourself. That little brat is brilliant and is definitely someone who will spare no expense to achieve his aims. Don’t count your chickens before they hatch and carelessly overlook things, lest you suffer your downfall at the hands of this little brat.” Suddenly, the voice of a youthful man rang inside Doctor’s Mo’s mind.

Doctor Mo’s expression changed in an instant, as though it was covered by frost. He icily replied:

“Yu Zhitong, you better not intrude in my business. Do you think you are qualified to tell me what to do? If I can succeed, I naturally won’t forget about my promises towards you. Instead, the question is whether you are scheming behind my back. Are you withholding some crucial parts of the cultivation art you imparted to me and hoping that some accident will befall me?” Doctor Mo’s voice was filled with suspicion as he replied.

The youthful man’s voice seemed somewhat terrified of Doctor Mo, and he hurriedly assured:

“How could there be any mistakes? Didn’t you already test it on some animals? Other than the one that passed away due to its unfamiliarity with the cultivation art, didn’t the rest survive? The failed experiments shouldn’t hinder your plans, right?”

“Hmph! That better be the case. It’s a pity that I can’t cultivate. If that weren’t the case, my chances of succeeding would be increased by a large degree.” As Doctor Mo heard the explanation from that mysterious voice, the last shred of caution in his heart melted away.

After finishing his sentence, that mysterious voice maintained its silence as though it was taught a lesson, leaving Doctor Mo to mumble crazily to himself. This caused the entire room to be filled with an eerie atmosphere.

At this moment, Han Li was holed up in an unassuming cave. This cave was even more secretive and remote than the meeting place he found

with Li Feiyu.

The layout of the area revealed that the only path to this cave was obscured by two mountain peaks that formed the shape of a line. The mountain ravines were swamped with shrubs and plants on both sides of the path, making the path impossible to traverse. The only way to arrive at the cave was through a hidden rope that dangled from the top of one of the mountain peaks. Other than that rope, there were no other entryways.

(TL: the original Chinese says that the mountains formed the shape “—”)

Thorny trees surrounded the area and occupied the majority of the area, only leaving a small piece of land where Han Li could cultivate. At the top of the mountain cave, there were some unknown vines weaved together into a natural canopy, so Han Li had no concerns that he would be accidentally discovered by random prying eyes.

Han Li removed the items that he held on his body, placing them below an enormous mountain rock, and returned back to the center of this area. He closed his eyes, falling deep in thought. Suddenly, his eyes snapped open, revealing traces of determination in his eyes as he lightly said, “Let’s start practicing from the Soft Bones Art.” And just like that, Han Li embarked on his path to cultivation.

What he didn’t realized was that not far from him was a yellow-coloured bird perched onto a tree branch, constantly monitoring his movements. Because Han Li had no intentions of escaping, the yellow bird did not immediately rush to inform its owner.

And within the mountain cave, a single glance could tell that there was no one else inside the cave. The only ones who were there were Han Li and that little yellow bird, which was preening its feathers as if it had forgotten its original mission.

Suddenly, a grey-coloured bird flew inside the canopy. It rested on top of a yellow pile of wood before taking off again.

In that instant when the yellow-colored bird saw a bird of the same species appear before it, its expression turned somewhat human-like as it

became filled with disdain.

The little bird that just arrived stood on one leg as it contemplated its surroundings. When it discovered the yellow bird, it flexed its wings, wanting to fly over.

Abruptly, something unexpected occurred. A yellow palm appeared out of nowhere, catching hold of the grey coloured bird in a single attempt.

This sudden change caused it to be terrified. It struggled in vain with its life on the line. No amounts of efforts could allow it to regain its freedom.

At this moment, the little bird understood that what it had mistaken for a pile of yellow wood was actually a yellow-robed youth. This yellow-robed youth had a dark complexion and extremely ordinary looks. Other than his clear eyes, he had no other attractive features.

The youth smile slightly, looking at the struggling bird in his hands. When it finally grew tired, he opened his palms as he stated gently:

“You can go. Don’t be so foolish next time. Look carefully before you attempt to rest.”

Once the bird regained its freedom, it no longer bothered with the yellow bird. It frantically flapped its wings and flew out of the cave opening.

As his gaze followed the path of the flying bird, the youth stood there mutely. Only after a moment passed did he begin to mutter under his breath:

“Seems like my breath control and concealing techniques are already somewhat proficient. Next, I must practice my assassination techniques.”

After speaking, Han Li walked towards a small wooden house which he had built, and on the way there, he involuntarily glanced at the yellow-colored bird.

This bird’s strange actions had caught his attention about half a month ago. This bird would always perch nearby, observing his actions, as if the bird had gained intelligence.

When he first saw it, he was amazed and captivated by the intelligence of the yellow bird.

He tried to capture it but was unsuccessful no matter what methods he used. This bird seemed to have no inclination to be fooled. It even stared at Han Li as if he were an idiot, causing Han Li to smile bitterly.

Afterwards, in a fit of anger, he tried to use direct force, but before he even got near, the yellow bird would soar to the skies, out of his reach. Whenever Han Li left, it would return back to its original spot. Han Li had no other ideas and thus could only stare at it from his original position.

On the surface of his mind, Han Li no longer concerned himself with the bird. In his heart, however, he had already deduced that the bird was here for a reason. Perhaps the bird was sent here by Doctor Mo to spy on his movements.

Even so, Han Li had no cause for concern. As long as the one doing the monitoring was not Doctor Mo himself, how many details could the little bird reveal? And in addition, he was amazed by the intelligence that this little bird possessed and was thus unwilling to use poison to deal with it.

At this moment, Doctor Mo was in a stone chamber, using the bones of wild beasts to form a strange array formation. As he arranged the formation, he was discussing matters with the mysterious voice from earlier, not knowing that Han Li had already discovered the method he was using to spy on Han Li.

Chapter 43: Fully Prepared

At this time, the Seven Mysteries Sect was undergoing a major event.

It turned out that the idol of the current generation of disciples, “Senior Disciple Li”, possessed a perception far beyond that of his peers. He quickly saw through two of the Feral Wolf Gang’s spies and their plot to steal the names of the disciples that were undergoing adventures away from the mountain. With ten fellow disciples, they captured them in one move. This was quite a meritorious deed.

Several days later, Sect Leader Wang awarded Li Feiyu the position of Protector in the presence of many disciples. This caused him to stride forward to the Seven Mysteries Sect’s mid rankings, leading to a rise of great sensation. Li Feiyu’s reputation had grown even greater.

Han Li didn’t know of this at all. He was currently sealed off in a wooden house in the mountain, undergoing special training. Aside from occasionally going to the kitchen to get some food, he did not have any contact with others. He naturally did not know that his close friend was currently held in such high regard.

Summer passed, followed by autumn. Time passed quickly until the arranged date had finally arrived.

In the ravine of the overgrown forest, there was a strange, incomparable silhouette midst the overgrowth of the dangerously sharp and thorny branches. None of the sharp branches were able to obstruct the floating, smoke-like figure. In the thorny undergrowth, he weaved between the thick net like a fleeing demon. In a moment, he had appeared nearby; in the next, he was already a distance away. These motions were absolutely quiet, as if there were not a fleshly body but rather an incorporeal form.

Finally, this silhouette stopped on top of a tree trunk. Vertically standing at its peak, he surveyed the surrounding distance. This was Han Li, with some success from his cultivation regime.

Currently, the clothes on his body had turned to little more than worn, tattered rags, revealing the his bare flesh. His hair was like a ruffled crow,

while his face was a mixture of black and white. His original appearance couldn't be made out. What was most astonishing were the small exquisite iron bells, each hanging from his neck, waist, arms, thighs and ankles.

Seeing these iron bells and then thinking about Han Li's ghost-like movements in the forest, it would be hard to differentiate Han Li's body technique from the movements of an actual demon.

Motionless, he turned his head toward the direction of God Hand Valley. He muttered to himself, "Just in time. I had just become proficient in the Shifting Smoke Steps on this final day. With this technique, I have a slightly greater assurance of self-preservation."

Although the expression of his face couldn't be seen clearly, the joy in his eyes wasn't concealed at all.

After several months of diligent research and training, Han Li wielded a number of formidable secret techniques. He held quite a bit of confidence in them. Although he wasn't convinced that they could withstand Doctor Mo's unfathomable skills, he held some confidence that he could defend himself.

A light breeze came. Han Li felt a slight chill on his body. He lowered his head to look at his "clothing". Thinking about his current appearance, he couldn't help but bitterly smile.

Recalling his training with Shifting Smoke Steps, he still had some lingering fear. In the forest undergrowth where he cultivated the technique, he had lived through a truly frightening experience. When he started training with this strange technique, he was covered all over with cuts and bruises from scraping against the unavoidable, stiff thorns.

Fortunately, he possessed Vitality Raising Pills. In addition to treating internal injuries, they unexpectedly had an amazing effect on external injuries. After eating one, not only did it staunch the wound, there wouldn't even be a scar by the next day.

Han Li clicked his tongue in marvel. This medicine was incredibly more potent than common concoctions. The only thing that confused him was

why the medicine was named “Vitality Raising Pill”. It seemed to him that the names “Scars Away” and “Staunch Bleeding” would be more appropriate.

If the experts that created the Vitality Raising Pill knew what Han Li was thinking, they would have likely spit out blood from anger. This elaborate and elusive healing panacea had actually been compared to the “Golden Wound Medicine”, a common Jiang Hu elixir, by Han Li, who thought that it was only relatively stronger. How could these experts not die from anger?!

However, because he had practiced in such a dangerous environment, Han Li was able to make the fullest of his potential. Within this short time, his Shifting Smoke Steps had reached the level of proficiency where he could immediately put it to good use.

In addition, Han Li’s Eternal Spring Arts had just recently and unexpectedly broken through to the sixth stage. This was the highest stage chant that Doctor Mo had given him. Were it not for the assistance of those tens of elixirs, even if he were to exert all of his strength, it would have been unlikely for him to achieve this level of success in this lifetime.

After a few years of cultivation, Han Li had quite a bit of understanding and experience with the Eternal Spring Arts. He felt that this level of success was very unusual. Regardless of the means by which he cultivated, the effectiveness and results were completely different from common martial arts.

Initially, Han Li thought that the success rate of cultivating this particular martial art, as well as the speed of comprehension, depended on one’s individual talent.

One bestowed with good aptitude would naturally perform as expected, without any obstructions. Even if one had no external assistance, by means of hard work, he or she would be able to reach a high stage.

But if one’s aptitude was no good, once a certain stage was reached, he or she would be unable to advance a single step further without the assistance from elixirs. Han Li estimated that in a normal cultivator’s

lifetime, he or she would stop at that very point without the slightest advance. This idea was very much reflected upon himself. In the past, he managed to cultivate to the third stage very smoothly, but at the fourth stage, he was met with incomparable difficulty and did not advance in the least.

However, if one had elixirs, the impossible would become possible, and it would be possible for one to break through the limitations of their natural aptitudes and advance to another stage. With this in mind, it is obvious how greatly cultivation depended on the power of medicine!

However, those like Han Li, who ate elixirs everyday like snacks, were reckoned to be nonexistent in the entire world. Therefore, it would be reasonable to say that the even more difficult fifth and sixth stage had been effortlessly cultivated by Han Li, who had not encountered the difficulty that he had faced from cultivating to the fourth stage.

The cultivation of the sixth stage of the Eternal Spring Arts, aside from making Han Li feel more vigorous than before, made his mind even sharper. For the time being, he hadn't discovered any other wonderful effects. What was strange was that ever since he cultivated this Eternal Spring Arts, his spirit, mind, and five senses were somewhat strengthened with each increasing stage, but it had little effect on his body's health. He had no choice but to make his body sturdy and his footsteps light. In addition, his cultivation of the Eternal Spring Arts had formed a new energy flow, which Han Li called pseudo-True Qi. Although it moved through the channels of True Qi, it did little more than make his sense of touch more sensitive. It did not have the same formidable might as True Qi.

Having trained this much, he was certain that the sixth stage wasn't the end of the chant. Perhaps it had the further wonderful effects that would be revealed in the later stages.

Thinking of this, he helplessly shook his head and sighed. With regards to his current relationship to Doctor Mo, the final stages of cultivation was a matter he could only dream of.

Halting his imagination, Han Li jumped, softly leaving the floor. Not a sound was produced. Then, with long strides, he walked to his residence.

Tomorrow, he would meet with Doctor Mo, but before then, he had to make full use of his innate skills. His mind planned each step of his encounter with Doctor Mo in advance. He carefully pondered every finite possibility of the dangers that had yet to occur and formulated an optimal plan for responding to the threats that he simulated in his mind.

Chapter 44: Antidote

The sun hung high up in the sky. Despite this time of year being the beginning of autumn, the heat from the sun was scorching hot.

Doctor Mo was in his room, fidgeting. Although he was confident in his methods of dealing with Han Li, he could not be completely at ease.

Suddenly, sounds of footsteps could be heard, slowly approaching his residence.

When he heard the sounds of the familiar footsteps, Doctor Mo was filled with joy. He rushed hurriedly and opened the door.

As expected, standing outside the door was his long awaited target – Han Li.

Looking at him as Han Li walked towards him, Doctor Mo fiercely suppressed the glee in his heart before allowing a trace of smile on his face.

“Not bad, you are indeed punctual. Seeing that you have made no attempts to escape, I’m truly happy. This means that you are intelligent. Let us enter the house before we have a good discussion.”

The expressions on Doctor Mo’s face was like that of a kindly elderly neighbor. The smile on his face was akin to a blooming flower.

“You can relax, I didn’t set any traps in the house,” Doctor Mo quickly explained to him, seeing the alertness in Han Li’s eyes.

“Hmph! Since I’ve dared to come, why would I be afraid to enter your residence?” Han Li immediately replied, as if he couldn’t stand the slightest provocation.

After he replied, Han Li took a step to enter the residence.

Doctor Mo immediately shifted his body to the side, allowing Han Li to enter. After Han Li entered, he extended his hands, attempting to close the door, but before he could do so, Han li interjected without turning back his head:

“if you dare to close the door, I will assume that you have some tricks up your sleeves. There’s no way I would still discuss anything with you.”

After hearing Han Li’s words, Doctor Mo panicked. However, he swiftly recovered and left the door open. Unsatisfied, he exclaimed:

“I truly want to have a discussion with you. I mean no harm towards you. Since you are not willing to let the door be closed, we will just leave it open then.”

After saying this, Doctor Mo reclined on his chair. The two of them silently stared at each other. They have not met for half a year, and thus, they were considering and gauging each other carefully.

In Han Li’s eyes, Doctor Mo had clearly declined a lot. He looked even more aged and withered now, no different from a 70 year-old grandfather. Involuntarily, he murmured in his heart, “Could it be that what he said was true? All he wanted to do was to recover his vital energy? Was there truly no other sinister plan?. Did I overthink things? “

As Han Li studied his surroundings, his pupils swiftly contracted. That muscularly built, mysterious figure was standing silently at one corner, like some sort of corpse. If Han Li had not meticulously scanned every corner, he would surely have missed him.

After his prior inspection of Han Li, Doctor Mo was extremely satisfied with his condition. As such, he warmly stated, “Looking at the current you and comparing it to the person who had just entered the sect back when he was only ten years old, you have already grown so much.”

The sudden shift in conversational topic and the change in atmosphere caught Han Li off-guard, making him wary of Doctor Mo’s intentions. However, in his heart, Han Li raised his alertness to its maximum level. This sly old fox, the salt he had eaten was much more compared to the rice Han Hi had consumed*. If Han Li was the slightest bit careless, he would undoubtedly fall into a trap.

(*chinese idiom meaning that the Doctor Mo’s experience was far greater than Han Li’s)

“Old Mo, I will forever engrave your care towards me in my heart, never forgetting it. Whatever request you have, I will try to fulfill it.” Han Li’s expression warmed, as if he had turned back to the obedient disciple he had been ages ago.

“Excellent! Excellent! Your words prove that I have not wasted my time and efforts on you. Come, let me see how much your progress with the Eternal Spring Arts has improved.” At that moment, Doctor Mo seemed to assume the role of the kindly teacher. Standing up, he directly attempted to take Han Li’s pulse.

“Sly old fox, how cunning and thick-skinned.” Han Li cursed in his heart as he swiftly side-stepped, avoiding Doctor Mo’s hand.

“Old Mo, don’t be in such a hurry, I can truthfully tell you that my Eternal Spring Arts have reached the fourth stage. However, I want you to give me the antidote to the Insect Corpse Pill first. After I’m cured, I will let you inspect my progress.” Han Li smiled as he used a sincere tone while talking to Doctor Mo.

“Oh! Oh my, my mind must have become muddled. My memory is no longer as good as before. Initially, I intended to give you the antidote the moment you stepped in.” Shock adorned his features as Doctor Mo seemed to have recalled something.

He withdrew a silver flask from inside his robes and took out a black-colored, ordinary looking pill, which he tossed towards Han Li.

Han Li acted clumsily and “barely” managed to catch the pill that was tossed over to him. Bringing it to his nose, he sniffed it. Waves of spiciness were released from the pill. He inclined his head to look at Doctor Mo, only to find Doctor Mo smiling at him.

He hesitated, suspecting the authenticity of this antidote.

Yet, there was no way for him to avoid ingesting it because the Insect Corpse Pill would soon activate. If he did not ingest the antidote now, it was equivalent to committing suicide. Han Li believed that Doctor Mo would continue acting cautiously and refrain from giving Han Li a fake antidote. Han Li’s expression turned heavy as he chose to swallow the

antidote, waiting for its medicinal effect to take place.

At this moment, Doctor Mo was extremely relaxed. He began to chat nonchalantly with Han Li, as if he had forgotten what his real purpose was.

Not long after, Han Li could feel a surging wave of immense pain originating from his stomach, but the pain swiftly subsided. He quickly began to inspect his own body and realized that the Insect Corpse Pill had disappeared without a trace. Joy filled his heart, and his face broke out with traces of a smile.

Naturally, the changes had not escaped from Doctor Mo's notice. He waited for Han Li, who was completing his inspection. With a huge smile on his face, he said:

"Ah, Han Li, when I gave you the Insect Corpse Pill to ingest, it was merely to give you extra motivation. If not for that, I think you might have have broken through to the fourth stage of the Eternal Spring Arts so easily!"

"Thank you for Doctor Mo's beautiful intentions. However, I hope that such intentions will not be needed in the future." After recovering, Han Li's state of mind improved, and he began to slightly believe Doctor Mo's sincerity. He was not as directly opposed to Doctor Mo as before.

"Now, will you allow this old man to take your pulse?"。

Doctor Mo's words caused Han Li's expression to grow unsightly. To think that Doctor Mo would still request examine his cultivation. Who knew whether Doctor Mo would decide to grab this opportunity to further control and harm him?

Chapter 45: Sneak Attack and Bared Teeth

Han Li lowered his head as he pondered. It seemed that there was no way he could avoid Doctor Mo's Inspection.

Doctor Mo had actually given him the antidote without hesitation, showing his clear sincerity. If Han Li still tried to beat around the bush, Doctor Mo's suspicion would be raised, causing him to think that Han Li had not yet broken through to the fourth stage of the Eternal Spring Arts and instead was lying to him with false words. If that were the case, things would likely take a turn for the worst, causing many unexpected occurrences beyond his control.

Nevertheless, Han Li had long anticipated this moment and made his preparations. Even if Doctor Mo had malicious intentions towards him after taking his pulse, Han Li still had several ways to guarantee that he would be able to escape..

As he thought of this, Han Li raised his head. He glanced at Doctor Mo with both eyes before saying, "Old Mo, seeing how willingly you presented me the antidote, I will trust you one last time. I hope you will not cause me to be disappointed."

After that, he extended his right wrist towards Doctor Mo while silently observing the the other party's reactions. If anything seemed out of place, he would instantly retract his arm.

Regretfully, Doctor Mo maintained the false smile on his face. He could not detect any changes in Han Li. The only expression he made was a slight twitch of his eyebrow after Han Li agreed. Swiftly, he regained his original expression. It appeared that Doctor Mo had long expected Han Li to agree to his request.

Doctor Mo made no reply as he silently extended his left hand and placed it onto Han Li's wrist. The smile on his face was slowly reined in, causing Doctor Mo to exhibit an extremely serious expression, as if he were carrying out an incomparably holy act.

Han Li secretly caused his body to manifest the Qi of the fourth stage.

When he saw Doctor Mo's expression, he raised his caution and alertness to the highest stage while his left hand slowly dipped towards his waist, where he had hidden a recently manufactured short sword.

Slowly, extreme joy broke out on Doctor Mo's face. From taking Han Li's pulse, he had discovered that there were unceasing waves of a mystical energy circulating within Han Li's body, its intensity far exceeding his expectations.

Despite him being a cunning old fox with vast worldly experiences, he could not help but tremble slightly upon seeing that his only hope for salvation lying before him actually had a chance of succeeding. Excitement shone on his face. His smile was extremely radiant and couldn't be compared to the fake smile he had on his face earlier.

"This is too wonderful! You really broke through to the fourth stage of the Eternal Spring Arts! HAHA! This is too amazing! HAHAHA!....." Doctor Mo began to laugh uproariously, not bothering to maintain his previous facade in front of Han Li. The sound of his laughter reverberated through the whole house but yet... his hands remained tightly clamped onto Han Li's wrist, as if he had no intentions of letting go.

"Old Mo, what is the meaning of this? Let go of me." Han Li's expression turned chilly; he had expected something of this nature to occur and had attempted to retract his hand immediately after Doctor Mo's inspection, but Doctor Mo had given him no such chance.

"Let go of you? Sure!" Doctor Mo ceased his laughter. However, expression on his face changed.

He suddenly unleashed a roar: "Tai!"

Han Li felt his ears rumble as the world turned dark before his eyes. His body lost its balance, and he collapsed onto the floor. His left hand, which had been grasping onto the short sword's hilt, fell limply to the ground.

"F*ck!" Even though his mind was clear, Han Li's body refused to listen to his commands. Despite all of his precautions, he still suffered from Doctor Mo's sudden sneak attack, causing him to be unable to react in time.

“Brat, you are still a greenhorn. No matter what tricks you have up your sleeves, you have no way to execute them now.” Everything was going as he had predicted. Doctor Mo couldn’t help but grin and appear smug after achieving his objective.

“Come over here!” Doctor Mo’s left hand pulled Han Li over, dragging Han Li’s body towards his legs. Lowering his own body, Doctor Mo extended the index finger of his right hand and jabbed at the paralyzing acupoints located in front of Han Li’s chest region.

“Peng!”

A sound rang out. Doctor Mo’s finger met resistance as if it had attempted to pierce into a metal plate. His fingers trembled from the waves of pain that assailed him. For some reason, his acupoints-stimulating technique had failed.

“What is happening?!” He became shocked as his heart shuddered involuntarily.

“Could it be that he wore a layer of metallic armor underneath his shirt?” Doctor Mo wondered, surprised by the resistance.

His gaze involuntarily searched Han Li’s body. However, seeing how thin Han Li’s clothes were, he shook his head and immediately discarded the idea.

In the moment during which Doctor Mo was distracted, Han Li regained control over his body. His recovery abilities were far beyond what Doctor Mo had imagined.

Han Li’s true cultivation was at the sixth stage of the Eternal Spring Arts. He had truly not wasted his time and efforts in cultivating. His recovery rate was extraordinary, far surpassing even his own expectations.

At this moment, Doctor Mo decisively discarded his train of thought, causing all of his confusion and suspicion to dissipate. He began to think of another method to control Han Li, but in that instance, he discovered that Han Li’s wrist, which currently locked firmly into his grasp, suddenly

became extremely smooth, as if it were soaked with oil. There was no way for him to forcefully exert his strength and lock onto Han Li's wrist.

Disbelief clouded his features. He tried again, but Han Li's hand was akin to an earthworm in the soil, easily slipping out of his fingers. Doctor Mo grew increasingly frantic.

Han Li would not believe him again no matter how much Doctor Mo pleaded. After Han Li was free, he began to roll his body on the floor towards the far end of the room. He only dared to stand up once he was at a far distance away from Doctor Mo.

The current Han Li had no expression on his face. Both of his eyes stared coldly at Doctor Mo.

There was no need for Doctor Mo to say any more nonsense. Although Han Li did not know the reason behind Doctor Mo's actions, he could tell that Doctor Mo most assuredly had bad intentions.

It seemed like what Doctor Mo had said earlier was all a bunch of nonsense, not worth an ounce of belief.

For the sake of his family as well as his own safety, Han Li drew the short sword, which had been hidden near his waist. This short sword was only a foot long, yet incomparably sharp. Its blade gleamed with a green light. This was a first-rate short sword indeed!

"Today, either you or me will perish. Only one of us can walk out of this place alive," Han Li coldly stated, baring his teeth in anger as he glared at Doctor Mo.

Chapter 46: Cleaving a Body with One Blow

Doctor Mo looked slightly astounded at his left hand, then returned his gaze to Han Li. He said disdainfully, "Interesting. It seems like you really didn't idle around for a year, even unexpectedly training in such a strange skill. But you did really think that you could become my opponent by relying on a few jack-of-all-trades skills?"

"It seems I have not fought for a long period of time. Personally taking part to exercise my limbs is not a bad idea. I will let you make the first move!"

Han Li did not pay attention to Doctor Mo's insult. He had already decided to gain the initiative by striking first. As the saying goes, be the first to act and take any opportunities.

The short sword in Han Li's left hand was brought towards the front of his body, attracting Doctor Mo's gaze. But from his inner right cuff, he quietly slipped down a white paper bag, dropping it into the center of his right hand. After that, he lifted his hand to scatter a wide stretch of fine white powder from the white paper bag. In the blink of an eye, it turned into a thick white smoke that enveloped Han Li entirely, making his figure appear unclear and indistinct. Moreover, the white smoke quickly diffused throughout the entire house and made the whole room into a vast expanse of whiteness. Even if one were to hold his or her hand out, he or she wouldn't be able to see even his or her fingers. Han Li had strangely disappeared amidst the smoke.

(TL: We have changed "dagger" to "short sword". The reason for this will soon become clear)

Doctor Mo wrinkled his brows. Han Li's move was beyond his expectations, but in his heart, he disregarded it. Because of his experience against this kind of third-rate trick, he had many ways to counter it. It was only because he was afraid that the smoke would prove to be troublesome that he held his breath. With his deep profound skill, not

breathing for forty-five to seventy-five minutes was no problem at all.

“Hmph! What insignificant talent! And you still dare to show off in front of me!” Doctor Mo snorted coldly. Suddenly, his right hand slapped an empty spot within the smoke. The smoke stirred as if it were being hit by a large club, and it immediately surged upwards, revealing a large distinct hole.

Though he could not see Han Li’s silhouette, Doctor Mo did not stop. Striking everywhere from all sides, he released more than ten strikes in a row, making the smoke in the house completely disperse out from the front door. The room returned back to normal, apart from the missing Han Li.

“Strange. This brat truly has some ability. Even when I am in front of him, he can make himself disappear as if he had ceased to exist.” Doctor Mo was astonished, but he did not panic in the slightest. He had kept a constant watch of the door and its vicinity. Even if a flea flew past, it would not escape his detection.

He carefully ran his eyes across the entire house. The surrounding bookshelves, a desk and a chair were untouched; everything appeared to be the same. There was nothing out of the ordinary. Thus, how could such a big fellow like Han Li disappear completely in a small place like this?

Doctor Mo’s expression changed. There were slight misgivings in his heart, but he boldly coughed a few times. He then unsteadily walked to the place where Han Li disappeared from, wanting to take a closer look at what actually happened.

When he was a few feet away from the area where Han Li disappeared, he stopped and squinted both eyes. He faintly felt a discernible killing intent direct at him from nearby, getting ready to make a move.

Doctor Mo’s eyes radiated energy that was used to carefully sweep the room. But even so, he was unable to discover anything abnormal. He began to worry that there was no one nearby; could it be that Han Li decided to go up to heaven or down to hell?

“To go up to heaven or down to hell,” Doctor Mo was completely lost in his thoughts and was thinking as if he had realized something critical. While he was pondering over it, there was a sudden “dang” sound above his head.

“Not good!” Doctor Mo suddenly realized that Han Li had concealed himself in the beam of the roof. He was unable to look up in time. With a shout, Doctor Mo raised his hand upwards and struck his palm severely to stun his opponent in one move.

Following the powerful strike, an explosion rumbled out, but the only sound that that was audible was sharp and clear “dang”.

Doctor Mo was somewhat puzzled and hurriedly lifted his head to inspect the beam. He couldn't help but to stare foolishly at the empty space above, where not even a ghost of a reflection could be seen. There was only a small black metal bell hanging from the beam of the roof, jingling incessantly in the wake of his strike. This was the source of the “dang” sound. Not even Han Li's shadow was there!

During the time in which Doctor Mo was looking upwards, a wisp of cold light, with the abruptness of a thunderbolt, pierced violently towards Doctor Mo's lower abdomen from under his foot. Its speed was incredibly fast, comparable to lightning or raging fire. He was able to detect it only when it was about to touch Doctor Mo's garments.

Doctor Mo turned pale with fright. In a great rush, he reacted instinctively and twisted his body. His whole body seemed as if it did not have a spine as he bent backwards, his body bending into the shape of an arch. This dangerous short sword blow just barely scratched his belly, making a small cut. It nearly slashed open his chest and eviscerated him.

(TL: the original Chinese says that he formed an iron bridge. Imagine him forming a bridge with his body by bending backward into an inverted U)

After experiencing that attack, Doctor Mo did not dare to relax. As if the sole of his feet had contained springs, he jumped backwards several meters without changing his posture. Only after retreating did he dare to

rise and look alarmingly yet furiously at the direction where the short sword's flashing light had emerged from...

Only to see that the ground where Doctor Mo had stood just moments ago began to slowly swell. Unexpectedly, the swell became bigger and taller until Han Li finally emerged. He had used a combination of Soft Bones Art, Breath Control Art, and False Hiding Technique.

At that moment, Han Li's clothes were the same color as the yellow ground. His left hand carried the same short sword that had nearly hit Doctor Mo, and his eyes expressed an annoyed look. It seemed Han Li felt that it was a pity that he missed his target just now.

startled by the previous slash and his heart was beating madly because he was still fearful of that short sword. He was not an inexperienced recruit who had never faced danger, but even so, there were only a handful of instances during which he faced a near death experience. What made this experience even more frightening was that it was caused by Han Li, whom Doctor Mo always despised.

He took a deep breath, his expression finally becoming serene, and said in a dry and rough voice, "It seems that I have underestimated you, my dear junior disciple. Your display of skill was not bad. You are truly worthy of me taking you seriously."

After saying this sentence, Doctor Mo slowly raised both hands to his eye level and gazed tenderly at his hands without saying a single word. His gaze was similar to passionately looking at a lover, forgetting completely about Han Li.

Han Li raised both his eyebrows and sneered. He grasped his short sword tightly in one hand and slowly approached Doctor Mo in small, measured steps.

Chapter 47: Demonic Silver Hand vs Shifting Smoke Steps

“Demonic Silver Hands”

These three words rang out slowly from Doctor Mo’s mouth as if they had drifted over from a far away place. They possessed unfathomable demonic energy, causing Han Li to involuntarily freeze, halting his steps.

Just as Doctor Mo’s voice faded, a surge of immense killing intent seemed to explosively gush forth from Doctor Mo’s body. The intensity of this killing intent was comparable to that of howling winds and torrential rains, increasingly getting stronger from all four directions, covering the entire residence.

As Han Li strode forward, he clashed directly with the sudden surge of killing intent, and was involuntarily forced back a few steps before he could stabilize his body, standing upright.

The expression on Han Li’s face underwent a huge transformation as his heart rapidly sank. He knew that Doctor Mo had finally stopped underestimating him and thus decided to use an ultimate technique to deal with Han Li. It seemed like his encounter with Han Li’s short sword had truly angered Doctor Mo.

“Hehe! Little brat, to think you could witness my ultimate technique, the Demonic Silver Hands. Your level of good fortune is normally accumulated over three lifetimes.”

(TL: Last sentence is an idiom: the blessing of three lifetimes)

Doctor Mo’s ear-shattering roar still buzzed incessantly into Han Li’s ear. Luckily for Han Li, Doctor Mo did not infuse the technique from earlier with his Qi. Doctor Mo disliked using this method to achieve victory, causing Han Li to be slightly less worried.

However, after hearing Doctor Mo boast about his ultimate technique, The Demonic Silver Hands, Han Li could not help but stare at the hands of his opponent.

After he looked, Han Li's face froze as he went slack-jawed, dumbstruck by what he was seeing.

Doctor Mo's hands, originally as thin as tree branches, were swollen to more than twice their original size. What was even more terrifying was that his yellow and pallid skin had actually undergone a physical change and took on a silvery hue. Under the bright rays of the sun, it reflected a cold golden light, appearing to be indestructible and completely constructed from silver.

"This is Doctor Mo's true strength?"

After looking at Doctor Mo's hands, Han Li's heart sank even further. He clutched his short sword's hilt with a single hand while rivulets of sweat involuntarily appeared on his palms, causing his grip to be wet and slippery. His combat experience was severely limited, so a single new skill displayed by his opponent was sufficient enough to cause Han Li to worry, turning the atmosphere heavy.

On the surface, however, Han Li appeared unaffected. With a calm countenance that did not reveal the slightest bit of worry, he seemed to look down upon the ultimate technique Doctor Mo was displaying.

Doctor Mo was ultimately unsatisfied. He began to see Han Li in a whole new light, but he still felt that displaying his supreme technique in front of a ten year-old teenager was truly overestimating his opponent, akin to using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. As such, he initially expected Han Li to be frightened and beg him for mercy. Only then could Doctor Mo soothe his pride.

"Do you know that I extremely hate the expression on your face? A brat who is still stinking of his mother's milk can act so bold, as if he has everything under his control," Doctor Mo coldly stated, making no attempt to mask his disdain and hatred towards Han Li.

"Oh, is that so? Letting Old Mo feel disgusted is my honor. I think that in the future, I should further nurture my talent in this area." Han Li sarcastically replied, hoping that his sarcasm would cause his opponent to slip up and give him an opportunity.

However, Han Li's obvious intentions were seen through. Doctor Mo stopped speaking and slammed his palms together, causing a "peng" sound to ring out, similar to the sound of grinding metal. His intent was to cause fear in the heart of his opponent.

Doctor Mo's figure shook as he leapt in the air and maneuvered his inflated silver palms. Like a raging wind and as robust as Mount Tai, he rushed towards Han Li.

Doctor Mo did not intend to waste any more time to capture Han Li. He would unleash his ultimate technique through a single strike.

With a heavy expression, Han Li focused his full attention on Doctor Mo's attacking stance. After Doctor Mo had leapt into the air, Han Li raised his hands and aimed at the weak point of any individual: his neck.

Doctor Mo slightly gawked when he saw how audacious Han Li was. Han Li actually intended to face his "hard" technique head on? Doctor Mo couldn't help but feel joy in his heart as he laughed manically. "Go to hell!" He directed a silvery hand to catch Han Li's short sword and aimed his other hand at Han Li's shoulder blade. Both hands smashed through the air with frightening speed.

However, although the palm strike towards Han Li's shoulder blade looked tyrannical and terrifying, Doctor Mo only used half of his strength in that strike, which totally contrasted with his shout earlier. He was worried that he would critically injure Han Li and ultimately be unable to use him in his plans.

Han Li naturally did not know of the truth of this matter, and as such, he treated the attack very seriously. There was no way he would use his own body to test the toughness of his opponent's silvery hands. Instead, he lightly shook his wrist, causing the short sword to slash horizontally instead of drawing circles in the air. He intended to use this move to protect the upper half of his body.

Doctor Mo snorted, but the trajectory of his hands remained unchanged, still relentlessly pursuing the short sword without the intent to evade.

"Dang!" A crisp sound rang out as Han Li's short sword slashed into the

silvery palm, causing a few sparks to fly. However, the short sword did not manage to leave even a scratch on Doctor Mo's palm.

Doctor Mo made use of this opportunity. Flipping his palm, he extended a finger and flicked it against Han Li's short sword without giving Han Li the chance to retract his weapon. As Han Li felt an explosive tremor, part of his short sword's blade broke and flew far away, burying itself in the wall.

The other silvery hand formed a claw that arched towards Han Li's shoulder blade, hoping to seal Han Li's movements and catch him alive.

Although situation was rapidly taking a turn for the worst, Han Li showed no signs of panic. He slightly shifted his shoulders and sprinted forward, his body transforming into a column of smoke in front of Doctor Mo's eyes.

Seeing such a vanishing body movement technique, Doctor Mo felt shock in his heart. However, he continued his attack, positioning both his hands in front of him like a screen to contain and block the smoke. He had no intention of letting Han Li escape.

The smoke was truly abnormal; it hesitated for a moment before darting slightly in all four directions as if it were contemplating which direction to escape to. It moved in a strange angle and evaded the screen. In the blink of an eye, the smoke sped towards the leftmost corner of Doctor Mo's residence before stopping and transforming back into Han Li.

Chapter 48: Lies

Doctor Mo landed gently on the spot where Han Li had originally stood. Without pause, he turned around to face Han Li. The proud look on his face was gone; instead, all that remained in Doctor Mo's eyes was shock.

At this time, Han Li wasn't doing very well either. He kept inhaling deeply while sweat collected on his forehead. Although his face was pale, his cheeks were flushed with a strange red color.

These were all signs that pointed towards one fact: the evasion technique that Han Li pulled to save his life had consumed most of his energy. It was highly probable that he would not be able to pull off the same trick the next time.

Taking a deep breath, Han Li tried to relax his body in order to relieve his muscles' strains from using Shifting Smoke Steps. All he could do now was to make the most of any time to recover so that he would have a better chance of winning in the next exchange.

Han Li glanced down again at his left hand, which was still slightly shaking. There was no way he could use his numb left hand to wield his short sword. It seemed that all the hard work he spent training himself to wield the short sword with his left hand was all for naught. He could only count on his right hand for the rest of the fight.

When he thought about it, he smile bitterly to himself. He lost most of his energy and couldn't use the marvelous Shifting Smoking Steps anymore. Even worse, he could only use one hand to fight. Since the situation couldn't get any worse, he decided to use his trump card.

Han Li looked at the sun outside the house, estimated its position, and thought that it was a good time to execute his next technique.

He peeked again at the short sword stuck in the wall, and knew that it was impossible for him to get back his weapon. Doctor Mo wouldn't let him just go and take it back.

Han Li mumbled for a little bit and pulled out another weapon from his

bag. This one was also a half-foot short sword with a scabbard, but since it was too short, it was more fitting to call it a dagger instead of a sword. When pulled out of its scabbard, it looked like a normal dagger with an abnormally thick blade that had been polished and sharpened.

Han Li threw the scabbard aside and switched the dagger to his right hand. He extended his right arm, pointing the dagger at Doctor Mo in an offensive stance.

Doctor Mo saw what Han Li was doing, but he didn't hurry to attack. He put both of his hands on his back and spoke softly with a kind face:

"Han Li, you surprised me when you repeatedly dodged my attacks, but do you think your luck will last forever? The movement technique you used just now was quite good, but it has its own limitations. Judging by your physical strength, it's impossible for you to pull it off again. Just surrender like you should have in the beginning. You should be able to see by now that I have no intention to seriously hurt you. Just listen to me, maybe it won't be as bad as you thought."

Doctor Mo's change of attitude made Han Li have goosebumps all over his body. He had changed from a gentle teacher to a cold-hearted and unfeeling figure. Now, he was using meaningful and heartfelt words to try to convince Han Li to surrender— Han Li didn't know what to say. Doctor Mo actually thought Han Li would be that stupid and fall for this obvious lie?

However, his words caused Han Li to gain some confidence. Doctor Mo wouldn't have used this childish trick to fool Han Li if he wasn't growing desperate.

Han Li thought seriously for a while. He then signed and shook his head. Without a word, he waved his dagger at Doctor Mo and showed him his refusal.

Doctor Mo's veins on his forehead suddenly bulged. Seeing Han Li ignore his words and use his weapon to provoke him, Doctor Mo couldn't suppress his anger any longer.

"You don't know what's good for you!"

He quickly took a big step forward and ferociously said, "So close yet so far apart."

Suddenly, Doctor Mo's body nimbly moved to a spot only a few steps from Han Li, as if he were capable of shrinking space, a feat that evoked extreme fear in those who had witnessed this technique before.

Han Li, too, had a look of extreme shock displayed on his face. He swiftly retreated two steps backwards, increasing the distance between him and Doctor Mo, before brandishing his dagger horizontally in front of his body. The blade weaved a dance of cold light in the air, blocking Doctor Mo's path forward as if Han Li had forgotten the previous suffering he had faced after clashing directly with Doctor Mo.

Doctor Mo coldly laughed. Of course he would not remind his opponent. He separated his palms and attacked Han Li from two directions, completely disregarding the dagger's strange dance.

As the two silvery hands approached the rays of light emitted from the dagger's dance, a bright laughter floated out, akin to what a hunter would do as he watches his prey step into a trap that was prepared beforehand. It was a laugh filled with immense satisfaction.

The laughter dulled Doctor Mo's reactions and made his heart slightly tremble. As he slowed down his attacks, he heard a cold voice saying:

"You have completely fallen for my trap. Look at the dagger in my hand!"

After hearing this, Doctor Mo involuntarily shifted his gaze over, only to see that the dagger had stopped its dance. In place of it, Han Li made a strange stance. He arched the upper half of his body and moved the sword down to his waist. The lower half of his body was stretched tightly like a knocked bowstring. His overall posture was similar to an arrow that was about to be shot from a bow.

Other than emitting rays of green light, there wasn't anything else strange about the dagger in Han Li's hand. This caused Doctor Mo to be astonished. Could it be that Han Li adopted such a weird posture just to distract him?

Thinking of this, glee blossomed in his heart. Doctor Mo wanted to sneer at Han Li, only to find Han Li rushing forward like an arrow of incomparable sharpness. Shooting forward like a bullet, Han Li's advance caused Doctor Mo's expression to change.

Hurriedly, Doctor Mo once again joined his separated palms together, intending to use his palms to suppress the edge of his opponent's blade. Strangely, the dagger only slightly wavered and somehow transformed into more than ten daggers that waved around in the air before piercing towards Doctor Mo from different directions.

Doctor Mo loudly snorted. In his heart, his evaluation of Han Li dropped by a few degrees. In front of an expert such as him, Han Li actually chose to use such an ordinary technique? Wasn't that equivalent to seeking death? Doctor Mo could tell with a single glance where the body of the true dagger was.

As such, he squinted his eyes, targeting the position of the true blade. He increased his attack speed with the intention to crush the real dagger into pieces, causing Han Li to lose a weapon.

Chapter 49: Hidden Within Concealment

Once both parties were about to make contact, Han Li slightly moved the edge of his dagger. The blade's angle had only shifted slightly, but in Doctor Mo's eyes, his whole world had turned into chaos due to this seemingly minuscule but earth-shaking change.

The small light reflected on the dagger's edge suddenly gave rise to a dozen extremely dazzling white balls of light. The radiance was incomparably intense, and Doctor Mo could not stop it from shining directly into his eyes.

"Not good." He secretly cursed in his heart as he hastily retreated backwards, immediately shutting his eyes. But by then, it was too late. The white light had already entered his eyes and prevented him from attacking.

In that instant, Doctor Mo felt his eyes heat up, and his eyeballs began to ache incessantly. Tears dripped down from his eyes without restraint, and he had no time to wipe them away. He endured the discomfort with much difficulty and strained to open his eyes, but all he could see was a vast expanse of whiteness; even an object's silhouette appeared like the layers of a mirage, fuzzy and indistinct.

He instantly felt angry and frightened. Because of his own carelessness, he regretfully fell for his opponent's crafty trick once again.

However, Doctor Mo had traveled the country for a long time and thus had plenty of experience in handling various kinds of dangerous situations. He continuously retreated several steps backwards to try and gain some distance away from Han Li and buy himself some time to recover. Simultaneously, he withdrew his palms to the front of his body and waved them relentlessly. Relying on the invulnerable Demonic Silver Hands, he protected the crucial areas of his upper body.

He had already decided that before his eyes recovered, he would not take the initiative to attack. Any offensive attack would have to wait until he could see clearly again before making a move. Doctor Mo was aware

that he was yet again caught within the brat's trap.

Currently, Doctor Mo's contempt for Han Li had disappeared from his heart. The level of danger in his struggle against Han Li was not inferior to the life-and-death battles against formidable opponents from his earlier years.

Even though he could not see Han Li's movements, Doctor Mo twitched his ears and listened with rapt attention, trying use his sense of hearing to determine Han Li's next move.

Suddenly, Doctor Mo vaguely saw a shadow flash by. Shortly after, there was a sharp noise and a surge of cold wind coming from his front.

Doctor Mo did not panic at Han Li's attempt to assassinate him; instead, he was delighted. Han Li's strategy was somewhat naive. If Han Li had silently hid at one side to mount a sneak attack, Doctor Mo would have truly been worried. However, there was nothing to fear from a bold frontal attack. He had already trained his hearing to the point of perception, able to distinguish between the sound of wind, a thrust of a dagger, and an attack from an embroidery needle– he was able to hear perfectly.

Doctor Mo heard the noise clearly, but his hand deliberately slowed down to make a small opening in front of him. Sure enough, the surprise attack immediately changed direction, deviating from its neutral path and making a beeline for his throat.

Doctor Mo grinned hideously. His right hand, which had been waiting the whole time, suddenly made a move. He quickly grasped firmly onto the edge of the blade as he did not fear the sharp edge of the dagger at all.

Han Li was aware of the turn of events and violently exerted some force to pull the dagger back a few times. But in the grasp of the Demonic Silver Hands, the dagger did not budge at all, making Han Li's attempts a waste of effort.

Doctor Mo felt a little proud of himself, but he did not dare to be careless for a moment because he was afraid that Han Li would realize this chance and release his grip on the dagger to run away. With

disregard for his ability to see, Doctor Mo abruptly executed a move using hundred percent of his power with one hand. He pulled the dagger to one side, planning to pull Han Li firmly away from his front and personally hold him down. Instead, Doctor Mo felt that his hand was as light as a feather, as if there was nothing in his palm.

He was greatly startled. He had definitely grasped the edge of the blade, so how could his hand be light all of a sudden? Even if Han Li had managed to loosen and release the dagger from Doctor Mo's grasp, it shouldn't have caused Doctor Mo's hands to become lighten this abruptly.

Doctor Mo did not have enough time to think about it. His body acted on reflex and maneuvered evasively. At once, his head dropped to one side, and he leaned over with all his might. His neck was bent in an unfathomable angle in an attempt to avoid a fatal attack.

Doctor Mo's many years of bitter training in profound skills had finally displayed their usefulness. At this moment. Doctor Mo felt something cool, a sharp object, brush against his neck. It barely grazed his skin and did not result in further injury.

After dodging this attack, Doctor Mo feared that Han Li still had some moves in reserve. Without thinking, he actually copied one of Han Li's previous escape tricks- he dropped his whole body to the floor and rolled away. Only after rolling a great distance from Han Li did he dare to rise and stand.

He hastily used two fingers to put pressure on the blood vessels in his neck to stop the bleeding.

At this moment, some fear arose in him. A moment ago, he felt that he could not hide anywhere within the room, but he did not expect his body's instincts to be brought into full throttle and actually manage to escape death by random chance.

He had been thinking hard up to this point, but eventually Doctor Mo could not help but raise his head to glance at Han Li. At this time, he discovered that he could see the objects within the room with clarity. He

was unaware at which point in time his vision returned back to normal.

Doctor Mo could only see Han Li glaring at him with dissatisfaction, obviously discontent with Doctor Mo's continuous evasion of his blade.

Han Li carried in his hand a sharp, inch-long weapon. From its shape, it resembled an odd awl, but its handle was the original dagger hilt. The weapon as a whole looked somewhat grotesque. The surface even had some blood stains on it. This was indeed the strange weapon that had injured Doctor Mo.

Doctor Mo turned gloomy, his eyes filled with fury. He kept having narrow encounters that threatened to cost him his life. Doctor Mo was about to lose his patience and about to burst with anger, but he noticed that his right hand was still holding on to something.

He looked down and saw an immobile blade. He lightly lifted it up to get a closer look. Suddenly, he realised that this blade was hollow; the space within the blade was similar to the shape of the sharp awl. This blade was merely a cover used to conceal the awl from his vision.

Because of this discovery, the rage that filled him was suddenly extinguished thoroughly.

Chapter 50: Aromatic Coiling Silk

Doctor Mo finally figured out why Han Li had been determined to keep the door opened the moment he entered the room. Han Li's request foreshadowed his use of the sun's glare. Doctor Mo's opponent was of such a young age. How could he be this thorough? This meticulously calculated sinister chain of events made this old and experienced figure of Jiang Hu unable to fight back. Han Li's profound schemes did not match his age and experience. Could it truly be that this person was truly a natural genius, perhaps even a reincarnated prodigy?

He pondered deeply. The more he thought about it, the more his fear grew. A cold sweat covered Doctor Mo from head to toe.

Enduring this frustration, Doctor Mo grew far more wary of Han Li. He cautiously and solemnly faced the youngster. For a short while, he did not dare to act again.

Han Li also did not know why Doctor Mo had just staring at him without the slightest intention to attack. For a short while, both sides had silently decided to cease hostilities. They gazed at each other in anxiety.

After a moment passed within this awkward atmosphere, Han Li suddenly started speaking. His sentence would leave Doctor Mo dumbstruck and distracted:

"Elder Mo, why don't we make peace? Or how about I surrender? What do you think?"

Saying this, Han Li swung his arms. He straightforwardly threw down his weapons and gazed at Doctor Mo with a smile, exposing rows of pure white teeth. Just like that, he donned the appearance of a simple and honest youngster from the countryside.

"Surrender?"

Doctor Mo originally believed that his ears had gone bad. However he immediately reacted. Looking at Han Li's discarded awls, he did not have slightest degree of trust, so he fiercely asked, "What's your plan? Don't

think that I would trust your false words. You want to surrender? You could've done that from the start. There was no need to wait until after we became irreconcilable adversaries. What else is up your sleeve?"

Han Li looked at Doctor Mo with a smile and did not speak. Instead, he seemed to tacitly agree to his criticisms. These two had once more sunk into confrontation.

After a short while, Doctor Mo seemed to think of an extremely funny matter. He unexpectedly lifted his body, put both hands on his abdomen and laughed at the top of his lungs. The laughter was unrestrained, and tears flowed out from the corners of his eyes.

"Haha! Ha! Haha! Truly.... This is truly interesting. I had actually forgotten such an important aspect. I had actually truly been...been the target of your traps," said Doctor Mo in an ambiguous manner in between his disjointed laughter.

Han Li wrinkled his brow, but soon after, he smoothed it out. As he glanced outside the window, the corners of his mouth formed a strong smile, and he calmly said, "Elder Mo, don't you feel that this delay has gone on long enough? It's about time to finish this."

Doctor Mo grew slightly distracted and stopped his hearty laughter.

He slowly straightened himself and stiffened his face. With an expressionless face, he stared at Han Li for a long time before coldly replying, "I, too, feel that it is time to conclude this."

The two suddenly calculated their respective chances of succeeding. In that split second, they both thought of ways to force their opponent to reveal their cards.

After a moment of awkward silence, Han Li slowly opened his mouth. He held no other thoughts other than the confidence of being able to force Doctor Mo to concede.

"Elder Mo, did you know... that your life is already in my hands?" Han Li's words could leave a person utterly astonished.

"My life is already in your hands?" Doctor Mo sneered; his face had an

expression of distrust.

“Don’t you think that wound of yours is a bit peculiar?”

“Nonsense. I took a careful look at it. Your dagger doesn’t have....” Doctor Mo refused to believe his words, but halfway through his own reply, his expression greatly changed. He recalled that what had injured him wasn’t that dagger but rather that hidden awl.

“It seems I don’t need to say any more. Elder Mo already understands my meaning.” Han Li looked at Doctor Mo with a snicker.

“Even if I were poisoned, you forget. Your medicinal techniques were all taught by me. There is no poison I cannot remove,” Doctor Mo calmly said. His face immediately went back to normal.

“Hehe! I forgot to say. The poison that I applied on my blade was ‘Aromatic Coiling Silk’.”

“Aromatic Coiling Silk?” Doctor Mo let out a soft cry of surprise. This had greatly exceeded his expectations.

“Correct, Elder Mo surely knows how difficult it is to deal with this poison!”

“Nonsense, how could you possibly concoct such a poison? I didn’t divulge even an segment of its formula.” Doctor Mo’s appearance was still strong, and he seemed to be unconvinced of Han Li’s words. However, from the strange sensation he felt from the wound, his heart was already certain that Han Li somehow managed to concoct the poison.

Seeing that Doctor Mo was still not admitting defeat, Han Li sighed. He would have to explain further.

“You have long forgotten that I was given complete access to your library. This recipe was slipped into an obscure medical book, but had I not been attentive, I fear that I would have missed it.”

Doctor Mo recalled this fact. Back when he had originally obtained this recipe, he casually slipped a detailed copy of the medicinal formula into a random book because he was afraid he would forget the convoluted

procedure, which required too many ingredients. Later, he completely forgot about this piece of paper because he had far too many affairs to handle. He hadn't expected this to benefit Han Li and cause him such a huge problem.

"We should take a seat and have a proper discussion. Let us shake hands and make peace!" Han Li confidently said.

Humph! Doctor Mo did not take notice of Han Li; his brain was hard at work remembering the effects of the Aromatic Coiling Silk.

Aromatic Coiling Silk. This name did not sound dreadful in the slightest. In passing thoughts, people even found that it sounded elegant and romantic. However, its poisonous strength was like the yearning of an infatuated woman: unbearable and bone-deep.

Chapter 51: Giant Man Displays his Might

Once the Aromatic Coiling Silk poisons the body, the toxin would enter the blood vessels and gradually spread throughout the entire body.

Ordinary mortals would not be in any danger, but to cultivators, this poison would be extremely fatal after a short amount of time. The cultivator affected by the poison could not recklessly disrupt his or her internal True Qi, or else the poison would flare up and cause the blood in the body to flow backwards, resulting in immense pain and suffering.

However, if one was poisoned for a longer period of time, the toxicity would penetrate the body, making the situation worse.

Even if a person managed to recover somewhat and properly control of his or her True Qi, he or she would still have to consume the antidote on a daily basis. Otherwise, gradual changes would occur within the bones, causing the body's foundation to wither. The body would curl up, paralyzed and unable to move. Eventually, the body would melt into a pool of mud.

Even more terrifying was that once the poison penetrated the bones, nothing could be done to extract it. The individual could only rely on long term treatment in order to survive. The poison would not flare up for the time being; instead becoming like a thread of carnal love, forever plaguing the victim's body.

The poison was made up of a variety of materials, many of which could be replaced. Although the end product would be the same, the specific toxicity would change according to the person who concocted it, making the poison unique to its maker. Naturally, the antidote would also be unique. Only the person who manufactured the poison would be able to prescribe the correct antidote and suppress its toxicity. Even if others knew the method of making the Aromatic Coiling Silk, they would have no way of concocting an antidote specifically geared to combat the Aromatic Coiling Silk that someone else had produced.

This way, the poisoned individual's puny life would be within the hands

of the one who poisoned him. Unable to rebel or resist, the victim could only be obedient.

Doctor Mo racked his brain for any memories regarding the Aromatic Coiling Silk, filtering through his vast knowledge. He then understood the reason behind Han Li's fearlessness.

Doctor Mo sneered in his heart, but his facial expression did not change. He indifferently asked, "Is this your last trick?"

"Brat, it seems you have ran out of moves, so just obediently admit defeat!"

Han Li's heart sank upon seeing no changes in Doctor Mo's expression. At this point, Han Li was sure he had miscalculated something since Doctor Mo seemed to have entirely disregarded his threat.

Doctor Mo did not seem provoked in the slightest, making it seem that he truly paid no mind to the Aromatic Coiling Silk in his body.

Even more so, Han Li was clear that because of this, he was in a very disadvantageous position. It looked as if his opponent was greatly certain that he could seize Han Li.

Seeing Han Li remain silent, Doctor Mo laughed and deviously looked at him before saying loudly, "Iron slave, capture him for me."

Once Han Li heard this, he immediately remembered that after entering the house, he thought that he had forgotten something very crucial: Iron Slave. However, he had no time to mull over it. Instead, Han Li used the tip of his toes to hook the awl that was beside his leg. It automatically jumped into his hand.

In an instant, a large shadow rushed from the corner of the room with a fierce wind following close behind. Its speed was incredibly fast, and it appeared before Han Li in a second, rendering him unable to evade.

Helpless, Han Li could only use the sharp awl in his hand to stab towards the shadow's lower abdomen. He hoped he would at least be able to resist for a while so that he could have a chance to retreat and recover his breath.

Stabbing the abdomen with the small awl was not the most optimal move, but Han Li had no other choice. His opponent was just too tall, and the weapon Han Li was using was only a few inches long, which made the abdomen the only area it was capable of reaching.

Han Li suddenly felt like he had just collided against some kind of monster. It was as if a large wooden object had smacked his extended wrist, directly dislocating it from his arm. Subsequently, his body fell back a few steps due to the impact. The awl in his hand seemed to have struck a rock and was sent flying, disappearing without a trace.

Han Li was unfathomably startled and angry. Just after barely stabilizing his body, the large figure appeared before him in the blink of an eye. Immediately, Han Li felt a sharp pain on both his shoulder as two large hands latched onto his shoulder blades tenaciously, pinning him down.

Han Li struggled with all of his might, but it was as if an enormous mountain were pressing down on his body, rendering him unable to move at all.

He was not able to do much in this kind of situation. In a moment of desperation, he lifted up his knee and aimed ferociously towards the weak point between the large shadow's legs.

“OUCH!”

It was so painful that Han Li was constantly dripped with cold sweat. Upon unleashing an attack that would have normally been fatal on his opponent, he discovered that the giant shadow was incomparably solid. His kneecap broke into many pieces just like the pieces of a hen's egg cracking upon hitting the egg against a rock.

However, Han Li's move only provoked his opponent. The large hands above his shoulders suddenly increased their pressure. Han Li was in so much pain that he feebly collapsed to the ground, almost losing consciousness.

“Easy, Iron Slave. I still have use for this person,” Doctor Mo loudly commanded..

After those words were spoken, Han Li felt his shoulders lighten, and the pain was greatly reduced. In his heart, he couldn't help but sigh in relief. For once, he thought that Doctor Mo's voice was pleasant to hear. But after rejoicing for a moment, his creeping suspicions resurfaced in his mind.

From the very beginning of their fight, Han Li found that, for some unknown reason, Doctor Mo would become lenient towards Han Li at crucial points in the scuffle, afraid that Han Li might hurt himself. Naturally, Han Li knew that Doctor Mo was not the sort of benevolent person that would intentionally go easy on him. There was definitely some sinister affair going on that Han Li wasn't aware of. Doctor Mo's concern that Han Li would hurt himself was why Doctor Mo had been cautious when taking action against Han Li because he did not dare to attack violently. If not, the two would have been at each other's throats.

Han Li secretly made up his mind to fully exploit this aspect when negotiating with Doctor Mo and then think of a way to escape his opponent's evil clutches.

As Doctor Mo walked to the front of Han Li, he could see through everything that Han Li was thinking. He let a sneer flash across his face as he felt around Han Li's chest and extracted a mirror. He couldn't help but be somewhat dumbstruck at this object. As it turned out, it was this object that had protected Han Li's chest from Doctor Mo's strike.

Without saying anything, he slightly nodded his head and took out a rectangular yellow wooden box from his bosom. This box was remarkably exquisite, and its surface was engraved with a dragon and a phoenix. Anyone could see that it was a rare and precious object, and thus rarely seen by ordinary people.

Doctor Mo faced Han Li and solemnly opened the lid of the box, revealing a few strange, identical silver blades. They somehow resembled a combination between a dagger and a sword. The body of the blades were very peculiar; they were curved into half moons, their lengths similar to that of stiletto knives.

When Doctor Mo took out one of the silver blades, Han Li saw that, oddly enough, the sinister blade was as thin as a piece of paper. The cold light flashing on the blade's surface was enough for Han Li to know that the blade was razor sharp. Using it to slice human flesh would be as easy as cutting clothes. The tip of the handle on the silver blade was even more bizarre; inlaid on the tip was an extremely ferocious and sinister-looking demon head, which had a pair of horns and eyes that were tightly shut.

Doctor Mo lifted this sinister blade and glanced knowingly at Han Li out of the corner of his eye.

This action left Han Li absolutely horrified. His inauspicious thought seemed to be true: Doctor Mo wanted to use the sinister blade to cut him.

Chapter 52: Seven Ghost Devouring the Soul

Han Li's face started to turn green as he helplessly stared at Doctor Mo lifting the sinister-looking blade high up in the air. Under the beams of sunlight, the edge of the blade sparkled intensely, showing its sharpness conspicuously. His heart involuntarily began to panic, but his intellect told him that Doctor Mo was only intimidating him. Since Doctor Mo had expended so much effort to capture Han Li alive, he definitely wouldn't kill Han Li off so easily.

As the sharp blade was seen descending slowly from the sky, targeting to pierce through his body, Han Li still remained silent, forcefully maintaining an expression of resoluteness.

Just when the strange sinister blade was half an inch away from splitting his head that even the tip of his hair could feel the waves of coldness generated by the sinister blade, Han Li slowly closed his eyes as a hint of regret flashed through his mind.

"Could it be that Doctor Mo is really going to kill me? If I had known earlier, I would have begged for mercy, there might have been a sliver of hope for me to survive. I am still very young; I really don't want to die like this. If the news of my death reached my parents, would they feel sad? Would they regret sending me to the Seven Mysteries Sect?"

At that fine line between life and death, all kinds of distracting thoughts arose in Han Li's mind, threatening to overwhelm him. All of a sudden, Han Li seemed to have experienced all the joys and sorrows of life at this instant, gaining enlightenment regarding the matters of life and death.

"Ka cha!" the sound of the sinister blade piercing a human body sounded out.

Han Li's body shuddered slightly, but surprisingly, he did not feel any pain from that.

“What is happening?” Han Li opened his eyes in surprise.

The moment Han Li opened his eyes, he was shocked.

Unexpectedly, he saw that the sinister blade was lodged in between Doctor Mo’s shoulder blades and penetrated deeply into his body to the extent that only the handle of the blade remained on the outside, trembling slightly. There was no blood despite the grievous wound, revealing that the edge of the blade was exceptionally sharp. While Han Li remained bewildered by the sight, Doctor Mo, against all sanity and reason, actually started to praise Han Li.

“Excellent! you little brat. You do have some guts indeed! Not crying out for mercy even when you were half an inch from death. Excellent! Hahaha”

“When i was out journeying in Jiang Hu [1] in the recent past, I met plenty of heroes who claimed that they were not afraid of death. But the moment they landed in my hands, just under the slightest bit of pressure, they instantly turned from a proclaimed hero into a coward, falling to their knees and begging for their lives.

Han Li froze. He stuttered incoherently, unsure of what to reply.

Previously, he almost gave in to the pressure and soiled in his pants. Only by gritting his teeth and forcibly enduring it did he manage to not to cried out. It was also because in his heart he believed that Doctor Mo would not have killed him just like that and thus he luckily passed this “test”. Moreover, Han Li also has his pride as a man and he was unwilling to change his stance to beg Doctor Mo for mercy.

Facing the praises from Doctor Mo, Han Li of course would not correct him. But countless contradictions arose in his heart, uncertain whether should he be happy or disappointed.

Just as a multitude of thoughts swam around in Han Li’s mind, Doctor Mo swiftly grabbed the rest of the sinister blades and proceeded to impale every part of his body deeply, only leaving the demonic heads of the sinister blades exposed.

After Han Li recovered from his state of shock, he realised that there was a total of 7 sharp blades impaled in Doctor Mo's body. The blades are inserted in both of his shoulders, both of his legs, his lower abdomen and rest of the blades were embedded in front of his chest. When looked at from afar, Doctor Mo gave off the impression that his body was hacked apart and dismembered in the midst of chaos.

Han Li didn't know whether he should be happy or terrified by Doctor Mo's self mutilation. Could it be that method was a prelude to a very powerful martial art? Could Doctor Mo be using the powerful martial art to deal with Han Li?

After Doctor Mo finished impaling himself, he entered into a state of mediation, no longer speaking a word and ignoring all distractions.

Han Li's heart shuddered slightly. He felt that this was a divine opportunity to escape. Just when he wanted to make a move, however, he abruptly stopped, appearing to have realised something.

Han Li smile bitterly. How could he have forgotten the giant fellow not far from Doctor Mo's side? That giant fellow had always been observing Han Li's movements, how could he have the chance to escape!

It appears that before entering his meditative state, Doctor Mo had already planned out everything meticulously. He was unafraid of any tricks that Han Li might have up his sleeves. This strange giant fellow named "Iron Slave" seem to have originated from some place mysterious. His body was the same as Doctor's Mo "Demonic Silver Hands", the toughness of his body was such that even the fatal weakness of the male species (groin area) was impenetrable by sword or spears. All of Han Li's plans to escape was destroyed by the mere presence of this man.

As Han Li was silently cursing the giant fellow in his heart, a change that seemed demonic in nature occurred in front of him.

The facial features of Doctor Mo started to twitch, followed by violent trembling of his whole body. His facial features contorted grotesquely, as if he was bearing tremendous pain. Along with the sinister blades impaled in his body, people observing would not help but be terror-

stricken, as if that they could feel that there was an emergence of a extremely chilled air rising in the room Doctor Mo was in.

All of a sudden, Doctor Mo stopped trembling. However an extremely weird low-toned roaring noise emitted from deep inside his throat. This sound has the feel of a savage primal beastiliy. At that instant, Doctor Mo appears to be no longer an old man but rather a terrifying primordial beast from the wilds!

Following which, a even more horrifying thing happened. The ghostly mist that appeared on Doctor Mo's face a year ago, materialized again.

Compared to a year ago, the ghostly mist that appeared now was distinctly different. Other an increase in the volume, the colour of the mist now was blacker than black. When it appeared on Doctor Mo's face, it was akin to him wearing a pitch-black mask obscuring his original features.

Shadowy tentacles also started to emerge from the ghostly mist. In addition to this, the ghostly mist underwent a earthshaking change. Amidst the shadowy tentacles, the black fog seemed to have gained texture, becoming shiny and velvety. It seemed to have a will of its own, expanding and contracting uncontrollably, giving the appearance of it dancing madly on Doctor Mo's face.

Both hands of Doctor Mo assumed the lotus hand gesture, contorting into a strange position. His lips were moving slightly, as if he were muttering some spell incantations, only that his voice was too low that Han Li could not catch what he said.

Alongside of Doctor Mo's strange gesture, the ghostly mist on his face seemed to be extremely agitated. Just like pouring ice cold water on a boiling hot pan, the ghostly mist started to surge and seeth, creating a lot of small tentacles that were writhing threateningly in the air. It seemed that they wanted to stop Doctor Mo from doing something..

Just as the black fog was at its most saturated point, Doctor Mo suddenly opened his eyes. Despite the intense blanket of black fog, Han Li could still see Doctor Mo's eyes were full of vitality and concentration.

“Seven Ghost Devouring the Soul!”

Doctor Mo roared out the name of the secret art that he is planning to use on Han Li.

[1]: world of martial artists

Chapter 53: Handsome Man

As Han Li heard the name of the skill, his heart involuntarily shuddered. What happened next left an everlasting impression on him. It reminded him that there were still a lot of things in this world that were unknown.

As Doctor Mo roared, the seven sinister blades embedded in his body started to tremble. A buzzing sound was emitted from the demonic heads of the blades, getting louder and more acute by the second as if they were coming to life.

As Doctor Mo witnessed the sinister blades vibrating, he mumbled something fervently. Han Li could not catch what he said but he knew that it could not be anything good.

Doctor Mo stood up, circled around the room, and finally stamped his foot in anger. He reluctantly raised his index finger and stuffed it into the mouth of one of the demonic heads.

An incredible and inconceivable thing happened. That demonic head that was supposedly dead actually opened its mouth and chomped down on Doctor Mo's index finger, as if it was enjoying some heavenly delicacy.

Doctor Mo's body slightly shuddered, as if he was forcibly suppressing the intense pain. Because of the black fog that was obscuring his features, Han Li could not see Doctor Mo's expression but he guessed that surely it would be hideous.

In the time it took to brew a cup of tea, the hunger of the demonic head was finally sated. Satisfied, it opened its mouth to release the finger while the buzzing sound started to abate.

Next, Doctor Mo began to feed each of the demonic heads in succession before unwillingly withdrawing his finger.

After completing this, Doctor Mo resumed the lotus hand gesture from before, mumbling the spells incantation and shouting out "Seven Ghost Devouring the Soul!" again.

This time, the seven sinister blades did not start vibrating. Strangely enough it seemed that nothing inconceivable was going to happen. However...The eyes of the demonic heads all shot open at the same instant! Revealing pairs of blood-red eyeballs, together with their mouths that were stretched wide open, they appeared to be trying, in futility, to suck something from the air.

The ghostly mist on Doctor Mo's face began to convulse and expand, as if it could sense the danger of an imminent threat. The movements of the tentacles got increasingly intensive and violent but to no avail.

Seven extremely fine lines of black threads appeared on the top of the ghostly mist, weaving beautiful arcs in the air. Following an unseen energy, the lines of black thread accurately sought out and were devoured by the mouths of the demonic heads that appeared to be eagerly waiting.

Han Li stared in shocked silence. All that transpired occurred right in front of him, so the details of every action by the ghostly mist and demonic heads, however minute, were deeply engraved in his mind. He was so close that when the mouths of the demonic head was stretched open, he could even see their teeth clearly.

It was the first time that Han Li had such close proximity contact with the mysterious energies from another plane of existence. He was awed and stunned by the feeling. The demonic heads of the strange sinister blades as well as the ghostly mist on Doctor Mo's face emanated out a heavy demonic air. This phenomenon could not be explained by common sense. In the past, Han Li had never believed in matters of the supernatural. If it were not for him personally experiencing this today, he would absolutely never have believed in it.

Yet how could Han Li not be unnerved..? Elements of stories from myths and legends were actually happening in front of his very own eyes.

At this moment, the state of Han Li's mind was in turmoil. Knowing that he was the target, Han Li was unsure of how should he react in the face of this extremely bizarre, inhumane power.

Gradually, the ghostly mist on Doctor Mo's face slowly started to

dissipate. The volume of the mist visibly thinned as the demonic heads devoured it, leaving behind a final layer of darkness and resulting in a faint shadow that clinged onto Doctor Mo's face.

As the mist faded, the facial features of Doctor Mo slowly began to be visible, but the moment Han Li saw the face of Doctor Mo, he was thunderstruck, gawking like a retard.

There was too many things that left him astonished today. However, all the things that had happened before were diminished by what he saw now.

The exposed facial features belonged to a man about 30 years old in the prime of his life. If one observed for a longer period of time, he or she could tell unquestionably that this was Doctor Mo. He had managed to recover at least a few decades of his vitality!

A face with a trace of heroic air, eyes that belied with dazzling charm, and a cold smile on his lips, no matter how you look at it, it was a face full of charisma, the face of a extremely handsome man! Deeply alluring and bewitching, it was a face destined to be a woman-killer. Regardless of young virgin girls or old sultry cougars, no females could defend against this sort of charm. At the slightest flick of his finger, as long as he desired it, there would certainly be females delivering themselves to his embrace, unable to extricate themselves from the river of love and obsession.

(TL: woman killer in the context of being extremely proficient in the art of picking up woman. females swoon for his touch, go gaga at the sound of his voice~ well you get the meaning hahaha)

After witnessing Doctor Mo's face, Han Li actually felt like there was someone grinding his heartstrings, smashing his heart to pieces. It appeared that this pretty boy countenance was greatly capable of arousing jealousy in other males.

As the last remnants of the ghostly mist was devoured by the demonic heads, Han Li suddenly remembered that Doctor Mo had told him before that he was only 30 years of age. It was only because of an accident

during the recovery of a grievous injury which drained away his vitality did he become old and decrepit.

From the looks of it, at the very least up to this point, Doctor Mo did not lie to him. This should be Doctor Mo's original face, it was just that the methods Doctor Mo used to restore his looks was too mysterious and unfathomable.

At this moment, Han Li realised that alongside Doctor Mo's features regaining their youthful look, his body.. and even his hair all underwent miraculous transformations. That jetblack hair, that sturdy body; without a shadow of a doubt it was certain that the physical energy of Doctor Mo had been rejuvenated to the pinnacle stage of his youth.

"But since Doctor Mo had a way to recover his vitality, why would he still go all out to capture me?" Han Li questioned himself.

Regarding this, Han Li had his suspicions. After he recovered from the shock, he realised that he was still in immense danger. Neurons started firing rapidly in his brain, repeatedly analysing everything and hoping to find a path of escape.

From Han Li's perspective, it appeared that Doctor Mo had been struck dumb. Doctor Mo was just standing there in silence.

After some time had passed, he finally raised his hand. Using an expression that was akin to looking at a precious newborn baby, Doctor Mo attentively studied his new shiny and velvety skin. After examining himself, he slowly closed his eyes, propping his chin against both of his palms and gently caressing it as if he were enjoying the long bygone feeling of youth.

Looking at the narcissism that clouded Doctor Mo's features, Han Li felt like vomiting. He could not grasp what Doctor Mo was feeling right now – that intoxicating feeling of recovered vitality.

"Old man Mo, looks like you have fully regained your vitality, hehe let me congratulate you first. It seems that you no longer require disciple's help, so could you possibly let disciple off the hook? No matter what issues you have in the future, your disciple would help you without

question.”

Han Li was running out of patience. Up to now, he was still unsure of what methods Doctor Mo was going to utilise to deal with him. Han Li pretended to be ignorant and questioned Doctor Mo, hoping to know his fate before making any decisions.

Chapter 54: Soul-Lock Seal

“Han Li, you are really flexible, knowing when to make compromises and concessions. However, letting you go? Do you think it’s even possible?” Doctor Mo sneered. Han Li was shocked at the sound of Doctor Mo’s voice

When Doctor Mo spoke, his voice contained faint traces of charisma, anyone who listened a sense of attraction and contentment. Compared to his previously bitter and insipid voice, this was totally different. It appeared that in comparison to his current looks, the beauty of his voice was not any worse off.

Surprisingly, this was the first time Doctor Mo ever called Han Li by his name. Although it does not mean anything much, it allowed Han Li to feel slightly appreciated as it was much much better than being called “little brat” every single time.

On the surface, one could not really sense any imperfections from the current Doctor Mo. Every single one of his movements was graceful beyond comparison. A handsome man indeed, there was no trace of the senile old geezer from back then. Han Li was sure that back in his youth, Doctor Mo relied on that face of his to dazzle countless females.

“So what on earth do you intend to do to me, just tell me directly.” Han Li was not a female and thus he was not affected by Doctor Mo’s handsome face. Furthermore, Han Li could tell from the previous conversation that Doctor Mo seemed to have no intentions of sparing him, and as such, there was no need for Han Li to leave him with any pretense of cordiality.

“What do I intend to do? HAHAHA!” Doctor Mo leisurely stretched his recently revitalized body, coldly smiling without any intent to answer Han Li while taking out another unknown object.

The unknown object was revealed to be a small holding pouch made from extremely fine silk. The glow reflected off of the silk was extremely radiant, just like the blazing flames of a phoenix. It was extremely eye-

catching. Furthermore, the embroidery was exceptionally exquisite. One could certainly tell that this was no ordinary object.

What could this small holding pouch contain? Could it be another bizarre artifact just like the sinister blades from before? Asking himself these questions, Han Li felt curiosity grow within his heart.

Doctor Mo cut Han Li's silent speculations short by quickly opening the pouch of holding. Following this, he cautiously drew out a rumpled piece of yellow paper.

Han Li was somewhat disappointed. However, he knew that the more ordinary looking an item is, the more difficult would it be for him to anticipate its uses. Caution arose in his heart as he became extremely focused. Thinking back to the incomprehensible events that happened earlier and seeing this seemingly ordinary piece of yellow paper, Han Li was sure that there were bound to be countless enigmatic mysteries behind it.

Doctor Mo gently held the piece of wrinkled paper between two of his fingers, carefully smoothing it with a serious demeanour. Han Li was now able to see that the piece of paper was not large, about the size of a palm and yellowish with a hint of mold, giving the appearance that this talisman had been created many years ago.

The most noticeable thing was that the piece of paper was shining with a silvery light, materializing silvery wisps of lines in the air. The lines slowly formed into many strange symbols in the air. Han Li had absolutely no knowledge of these foreign symbols.

The moment he saw them, however, his heart started to feel as if there were an unfathomable and mysterious energy pulsing within the floating symbols. Even the qi he obtained from the Eternal Spring Arts was moving in his body erratically as if it sensed immense danger, leaving Han Li stupefied.

Sensing that something was wrong, Han Li quickly focused all his attention on the strange symbols, hoping to understand the mysteries behind them.

The symbols twisted here and curved there, zigzagging around the air, yet there seemed to be something miraculous hidden within the strangely shaped symbols that he was unable to grasp. It was a pity that there was insufficient time for him to figure them out.

In this instance, Doctor Mo arrived in front of Han Li. When he saw Han Li concentrating exclusively on the yellow paper in his hand almost to the point of being obsessed, a slight hint of mercy involuntarily flashed in his eyes.

He gently lowered his head, moved his lips closed to Han Li's ears and slowly said in an extremely low pitched voice:

"Don't blame me Han Li, I am also left with no choice, so you best willingly submit to your fate and await reincarnation. I am going to take over your shell of a body now."

"What did you just say? What is the meaning of this?!" Han Li was shocked awake by Doctor Mo's words. He was so terrified by them to the point where his soul almost scattered and flew out of his body. He could sense that a fate worst than death will happen to him momentarily.

Han Li no longer cared about the threat of the giant fellow behind him and fiercely struggled for his life. Hidden within his clothes, he still had a few items that may proved helpful in creating a distraction, thereby giving him a path of escape.

"Iron Slave, suppress him fully, don't even give him the chance to flail about."

Doctor Mo's orders destroyed his last chance for freedom. Two gigantic palms, akin to small mountains, were securely pressing him down, not giving him a chance to move.

Rivulets of sweat flowed down Han Li's face all the way down to the ground. He opened his eyes wide, gritted his teeth and listened to Doctor Mo's incomprehensible muttering.

Once Doctor Mo began chanting, the piece of yellow paper, wedged between Doctor Mo's finger, started to flutter intensively at the sound of

the spell incantation despite the lack of wind.

Meanwhile, the silver symbols in the air started to shine with a mysterious silvery glow.

Even though Han Li's movements were sealed, he was still clear headed. He understood that the mysterious silvery glow signified that Doctor Mo was about to make his move.

Doctor Mo looked solemnly at the talisman, and when the last of the symbols glowed with that mysterious silvery light, he roared in delight. Using various special methods, he waved the yellow paper wildly in the air, writing the word for "seal".

After the word "seal" was completed, a thunderclap noise rumbled out.

At the same time, the talisman was pressed firmly onto Han Li's forehead, staunchly sticking there.

As the talisman came into contact with his forehead, Han Li lost control of his bodily functions. He couldn't even blink. Despite this, he was still able to see with his eyes and hear with his ears. He was currently the same as a normal human, unable to circulate his internal energy, akin to a walking zombie.

(TL: "walking zombie" refers to a person who is unable to cultivate internal energy. In other words, a regular mortal)

This type of feeling was totally different from that of his acupoints being sealed. After one's acupoints are sealed, although one could not move, they are still able to feel numbness and itchiness. The current Han Li, however, was not able to feel anything.

(TL: acupoints means acupuncture point.)

Waves of terror assaulted Han Li. He did not know how Doctor Mo was going to control his body and steal his identity. Was this considered a successful attempt?

"Don't rush, your body should still be able to sustain this state for a little while longer." Doctor Mo muttered, although Han Li was unsure

about whether he was talking to Han Li or to himself.

Chapter 55: The Third Person

“You truly are quite cunning,” said Doctor Mo. “If you were left to your own devices, even I would have some difficulty dealing with you.” Doctor Mo spoke in a calm and unhurried tone as he lifted Han Li and carried him outside of the house.

It was still very hot outside, which made Han Li realize that although he thought he had been in the house for a long time, the events had lasted shorter than he expected.

Doctor Mo continued to effortlessly carry Han Li as if he were a weightless object, walking at a leisure pace until he passed the medicine garden and came upon a remote cliffside. The silent giant continued to follow Doctor Mo’s footsteps, refusing to leave his side almost as if he were his shadow.

Through his own eyes, Han Li was able to see that there was more to the cliff than met the eyes. Upon closer inspection, he realized that carved into the cliff was a stone room he had never seen before. This room was similar to the stone room Han Li had cultivated in before, but this stone room was covered with a layer of limewash.

From its rough appearance, Han Li judged that the room was constructed recently. He was certain that he would be able to smell the pungent smell from the limewash.

Afraid that somebody might come along and disrupt his plan, Doctor Mo ordered the giant, “Iron Slave, stay outside and stand guard. If you see anyone near the house, kill on sight.”

He then easily opened the door and stepped inside, closing the door behind him. His familiarity with the layout of the room suggested that Doctor Mo built this place himself.

Han Li assumed that with the door tightly-shut and closed windows, the room would be pitched black, but contrary to his belief the room was filled with candles of many different shapes and sizes that were brightly illuminating the room to the point where it seemed as bright as the

outside daylight.

The room left Han Li speechless, but even if he wanted to say something, he was unable to control his body.

Since he could not control his body, Han Li had no choice but to examine the interior of the room. He noticed a strange pattern in the center of the room. It seemed to be made of some sort of powder, but Han Li was unable to get closer look.

At the edge of the strange pattern were fist-sized pieces of jade that glowed in the candlelight. With a glance, it was obvious that each piece of jade was a rare and priceless item. If an expert on precious stones were to see such priceless treasures set on the ground, he would feel such an immense heartache that he would be unable to sleep for several nights.

At this time, Han Li felt his body being roughly thrown by Doctor Mo. His body made a “putong” sound as he crashed into the center of the pattern with his body facing upwards. Unable to move his body, he could only capable of staring at the ceiling.

To say the least, Han Li was extremely anxious from being unable to anything in his current situation. The fact that he failed to see any of Doctor Mo’s actions made him unable to calm down and heightened his fear. The only consolation he had was that he was not facing the ground or else he would have been been unable to to even look at the ceiling.

“Pu Pu Pu...” sound of puffing

A string of strange sounds heightened Han Li’s fear and confusion, but he soon realized that it was the sound of Doctor Mo blowing out several candles. Gradually, the room became dimmed.

Han Li did not know the purpose of this action, but he did not have much time to ponder on its meaning since Doctor Mo suddenly opened his mouth and said:

“The method you mentioned, will it really work?... Well I’m betting everything on it” said Doctor Mo in a cold tone that sounded out of place. This caused Han Li to be bewildered as he did not know if he was the one

being spoken to. There were only two people in this room, him and Doctor Mo, so who else could he be talking too. Did Doctor Mo forget about the cursed yellow paper that prevented him from speaking?

“I guarantee it will work. After all, how could the Seven Ghost Technique that I passed on to you be fake?” A new voice suddenly replied, seemingly out of nowhere. At this point Han Li was beyond being surprised at the sudden appearance of a new character because all the strange things he experienced in the past few hours far exceeded the amount of strange things he heard in the past few years. Instead of being astonished, Han Li calmly deduced from the sound of the man’s voice that he must be a young adult around the age of 20.

“Heng! What’s the point if it ends up failing halfway?!”

(TL: “Heng” is an exclamation, not the name of the mysterious man)

Right afterwards, Doctor Mo released a out a string of curses which caused no amount of shock to Han Li. This type of vulgarity was nothing special coming from Doctor Mo, but his sudden transformation into a pretty boy made his dirty words seem out of place, allowing Han Li to feel a hint of sardonic pleasure in his pitiful situation.

“If you suddenly pull a trick at the end and make me fall into your trap, who am I to turn to then?”

Not waiting for the young voice’s reply, Doctor Mo continued on with a self-preserving tone, “I don’t want to hear your useless guarantees. I know you are already dead since I was the one who killed you. How could you not hold bitter hatred for me and try to look for any opportunity to gain revenge? Do you think you can deceive me? ”

Not giving the other person any chance to refute him, Doctor Mo kept talking almost as if he were taking this chance to pour out all his pent up thoughts and insecurities.

The mysterious man did not react to Doctor Mo’s spiel. As a result, the only audible sound within the penetrative silence of the stone room was Doctor Mo’s breathing

Han Li couldn't help but break out into a cold sweat as he finally processed the fact that the mysterious young man was deceased. That would make him some sort of ghost, would it not? Also, from what Doctor Mo revealed in his tirade, it seemed that the weird technique he just used was learned from the man he had killed!

The mysterious man finally replied angrily, "Well, what else do you want me to do? I already swore on my ancestors, my parents, my whole family, and even on my family name, are you still not satisfied?"

Hearing this, Han Li couldn't help but feel his heart jump a beat as he realized that the mysterious man was so perverse and demented that he would swear on so many of his family members just to gain Doctor Mo's trust. At first he felt a sense of connection as they both seemed to be in dire straits but that feeling quickly disappeared from Han Li's mind.

"You're right. You can't do anything to me right now since your body has been destroyed, leaving behind your soul. You can't even see the light of day, and what little strength you have left is useless against me" Doctor Mo said in a slow and deliberate manner in order to maintain his facade.

Chapter 56: Battle of the Light Globes

“Yu Zhitong, I just want to remind you again that if anything happened to me, you won’t be any better off.”

“You know that your soul won’t last long in its current state and that you depend on me to help you look for a new body. So if there is anything you want to say, say it now while there is still time. I will not be angry unless it turns out you failed to tell me some crucial knowledge” said Doctor Mo as he was unwilling to give up any attempts at trying to pry out hidden information from the mysterious youth.

From these words, it becomes evident to Han Li that Doctor Mo was in fact very afraid of Yu Zhiyong doing something at the final moment that would cause his downfall and was looking for more reassurance that his plans have not been tampered with.

In response to Doctor Mo’s words, Yu Zhitong, who fully understood the risks involved with harming Doctor Mo, replied smoothly, “There is no point in me tampering with your plans, and if I do then may my family suffer heaven’s retribution.”

Besides, after using the Seven Soul Devouring Technique, at the price of your fundamental essence, you would temporarily receive a certain amount of magic power, enabling to use a few simple spells; but your existence now is currently that of a soul, once your fundamental essence is used up, are you sure you could still execute such a spell?” After Yu Zitong swore a venomous oath against harming Doctor Mo, he prodded at his weaknesses and leaving no way for Doctor Mo to back out.

Although Han Li wasn’t religious, listening to their dialogue made Han Li pray silently to the Heavens that Doctor Mo would give up his evil plans. It seems like a ridiculous thing to do, but it was the only thing he could do.

“Okay, I will use what I trust and ignore what I don’t. Since there are such great benefits, it is only natural that there would be some risks,” said Doctor Mo after making up his mind.

Hearing this, Yu Zhitong seemed quite happy and excitement appeared in his words. “See, that is the correct mindset. Think about it. You were originally a mere mortal without spiritual roots, unable to step onto the path of immortality. But if this plan becomes a success, that will no longer be the case! With your new body and powerful spiritual foundation, any large sect or clan would beg for you to join. Not only that, your body would be immune to sickness and death, allowing you to live five times as long as a normal mortal!”

“Haha, then I will trust you on this matter. Do not worry, I, Mo Juren, am a man of my words. What I say will most definitely be done. Once I am successful in this endeavor, I will immediately help you find a suitable body with a strong spiritual foundation. I promise you that I won’t let you down, Little Brother Yu.” After listening to Yu Zhitong’s promises, Doctor Mo initial worry was gone as he took up a kinder tone, addressing Yu Zhitong with close familiarity.

“Then if that is the case, I thank Big Brother Mo. After your success, I will single-handedly teach you each and every one of the cultivation techniques I have in my possession” said the cunning Yu Zhitong; he knew he had successfully lured in Mo Juren with his words.

Han Li listened as the two shamelessly talked about using his body without asking for his opinions. Even though he realized that he wasn’t able to do anything given his current situation, he couldn’t help but feel annoyed at how they don’t give him any face.

Once Doctor Mo dispelled his doubts and made up his decision to follow through with the plan, he no longer delayed, immediately pulling out some golden needles and stabbed them into his mixue acupuncture point located in the back of his head. He was immediately invigorated, his body filled with enough energy to perform the next step of his plan and increase his chances of success.

He strode to where Han Li lay, sat him upright into a meditating position, and then proceeded to sit in front of Han Li with his arms crossed over his chest, tightly hugging his shoulders.

Then, Doctor Mo executed a Celestial Technique. With a wave of his hand, a red beam of light shot out from his palms and hit the pattern that was laid out underneath Han Li, causing the jades placed around the perimeter of the diagram to glow.

Doctor Mo proceeded to whisper the spell incantation that held an enchanting and bewildering effect, causing those who heard it to feel drowsy. As the chant continued, Han Li felt a deep sense of weariness, causing everything to become a blur as he slowly lost consciousness.

“Not good” thought Han Li, knowing fully well that this was the intended effect of the mysterious chant and that once he fell unconscious, his body would be possessed. Holding onto this thought, Han Li resisted the temptation to sleep. Thoughts of biting his tongue and pinching himself were quickly disregarded as he was not in control of his body, so in the end, no matter how hard he tried, he was unable to fight off the effects of the spell and fell to a deep slumber. Right before he fell unconscious, the last image he saw was the handsome face of Doctor Mo. At that moment, however, Doctor Mo looked more like an ugly devil than a handsome figure. The last words Han Li wanted to say to Doctor Mo was, “Your ugliness suits you.”

Within the endless darkness of his subconscious, Han Li dreamt a very strange dream. In his dream, he was a fist-sized globe of green light that was happy and free in his own little world.

But not long after, a thumb-sized yellow globe carrying an evil intent suddenly invaded his dream. Upon seeing the green globe, the yellow ball of light aggressively charged at the green globe of light, suddenly revealing its mouth to bite down upon the green globe that was Han Li. Of course Han Li was not weak, and he also opened his mouth to retaliate. After just a few exchanges, Han Li easily ended the battle by swallowing the yellow globe of light. The victorious Han Li rejoiced in his victory, but soon enough another intruder entered his subconscious. This foreign entity was also a green globe of light that was many more times the size of Han Li, but it did not contain the same glow and luster of Han Li’s globe of light. When the enemy saw Han Li’s globe of light, it was

shocked; hesitation appeared on its features.

After Han Li experienced the amazing taste of devouring other globes of light, the sight of a new enemy did not cause Han Li to give much thought to his opponent's power as he charged right at his enemy with the intent of devouring him. The enemy, seeing Han Li's attack, reluctantly chose to charge forward and engage in battle. Even though the opponent was many times bigger than Han Li, its attacks were only slightly stronger than the yellow globe of light Han Li recently devoured. Upon realizing its disadvantage, the invader tried to turn and escape, but Han Li was unwilling to let it leave so easily and gave chase, biting at the fleeing invader. The invader was very tricky and slippery; every time Han Li seemed to have caught it, the green globe would cut off the part that was caught and continue to flee. In the end, the invader managed to flee, but its body mass was one third its original size. Although Han Li was reluctant to let his opponent go, there was nothing he could do about the matter and so decided to wait around for more enemies to invade so that he could also devour them. Sadly, no more globes of light came, and he continued to float around.

Chapter 57: Body Awakening, Enemy Perishing

Hidden within the depths of his heart, an icy chill slowly appeared and quickly spread throughout Han Li's body, rousing Han Li from his stupor.

When Han Li became clear headed, the first thing he felt was an immense pressure in his head, followed by waves of pain across his entire body. He felt indescribably weak as one would feel at the onset of a serious illness, and he was unable to open his heavy eyelids no matter how much effort he expended.

Still feeling a bit dazed, Han Li managed to recall the events that occurred right before he passed out.

Han Li was struggling for control over his body when an immediate sense of panic flashed through Han Li's mind, causing adrenaline to flood through him, sharpening his befuddled mind and allowing him to quickly assess the situation around him.

"Yi!" He exclaimed in shock as he realized that his mind had not been taken over by Doctor Mo. True, he could barely move his eyelids, not to mention the rest of his body, but the waves of pain spreading throughout his body told him clearly that he had regained control over his own body and that Doctor Mo had failed in his plans.

"Why did Doctor Mo's plan fail? Did he do something wrong?"

Filled with surprise, Han Li was able to think of one plausible explanation for his current situation.

Barely containing the excitement within his heart, Han Li patiently waited for his body to regain some of its energy before he tried once more to open his eyes. After a short but strenuous battle he managed to crack open his eyelids to see the what was going on around him.

The first image he saw when he opened his mind was the sorry state Doctor Mo was in: his hair was all white, his face was thin, wrinkled, and haggard. It seemed like he was at least ten years older than he was before

his youthful transformation. With this appearance, it was impossible to imagine him any older. His features seem to embody the meaning of the word “old,” and he was now simply a poor old man.

In front of Han Li, Doctor Mo’s eyes were wide open as he stared at Han Li with a look of unbridled terror.

Han Li himself was equally shocked, and his muscles immediately tensed. All sense of weakness left his body as the only thought that rang out within him was to make the first move and gain the upper hand.

Clearly learning from his previous lesson, Han Li was unwilling to once again fall under someone else’s control.

But afterwards, Han Li realized something strange. His opponent’s face seemed to be frozen in fear and there was no sign of breathing from Doctor Mo. It became apparent that he was dead and may have been dead for quite a while now.

Unwilling to let down his guard, Han Li continued to stare deeply, with eyebrows furrowed, at Doctor Mo’s facial features in search of anything that might give him away.

After a whole thirty minutes of careful scrutiny, Han Li was forced to admit that Doctor Mo was indeed dead for he did not hold any resemblance to that of someone who was still alive.

Hesitating, Han Li carefully crawled up to him and stretched out one hand to grasp the Doctor Mo’s wrist while his other hand was placed under his nose. In this position, he waited for a while, but there was still no reaction.

It was only with this final affirmation of Doctor Mo’s death that Han Li felt his heart settle and relax. The sense of oppression he had felt in his heart was finally discarded.

Until now, Han Li had always carried some doubts within his mind as he did not believe his biggest enemy, the cunning and crafty Doctor Mo, would die so easily from an unknown cause of death.

Han Li scratched his forehead, only to realize that the “Soul-Lock Seal”,

which had been fixed to his forehead, had disappeared without a trace. This made Han Li feel strange. He would later learn about talismans and sealing techniques, and only then would he realize what had happened! It seems that all the power in the yellow talisman had been used up and thus it had disintegrated into dust, so Han Li was unable to find it.

The now relaxed Han Li, decided to continue being cautious and started to scan the area around Doctor Mo to see if there were any traces of life.

Han Li noticed that the candles were still lit, signaling to him that he had not been out for a long time. The jade pieces, on the other hand, had lost all their previous luster and seemed to have been degraded, unable to catch anybody's eyes.

Shifting his attention towards the left side corner of the stone room, he focused on an object that had previously evade Han Li's detection. Han Li was not a stranger to this object. This object was the invading green globe from his dream that had managed to escape from his grasp but not before having one third of its mass devoured by Han Li.

At this time, it desperately tried to dig into the corner of the room, apparently afraid of Han Li and trying its very best to hide from his sight.

Amused, Han Li looked at this scene with one hand stroking his chin.

Then, he quickly stood up and strode over to the ball of light.

Only when he was half an inch away from the ball of light did he stop and slowly open his mouth:

"I think we both know each other. You should be Yu Zhitong. Am I correct?"

The green light, which contained Yu Zhitong, started to tremble and flicker at the sound of Han Li calling its name, but after pausing for a moment it started to shine brightly again.

"You guessed correctly. It seems you truly are Doctor Mo's disciple. You are just like him, tough and hard to deal with," said the ball of light, accepting its fate. From its voice, Han Li could tell that it really was the young man whom Han Li heard conversing with Doctor Mo.

It did not try to hide its identity and instead confirmed Han Li's thoughts.

Now knowing what he was dealing with, Han Li asked "Since you were one of the culprits trying to take my life and possess my body, shouldn't you provide me with an explanation?" Han Li did not reveal any anger as he talked to the culprit; instead, he had a rather calm demeanor.

Even so, Yu Zhitong, seeing Han Li's indifferent attitude, was at a loss regarding what to do, feeling a sense of dread within his heart.

In the recent battle between their two souls, he experienced first hand Han Li's might and even had a portion of his soul devoured, causing his Internal Qi to drop by half. The remaining half of his Internal Qi could only be used to perform minor incantations that had neither the power to kill Han Li nor the power to protect himself, allowing a sense of fear to ingrain itself within his heart.

"What do you want to know?"

He knew that, Han Li had recently escaped from a life threatening situation and therefore would not be emotionally stable. Although he may look calm and collected, who knows how he was truly feeling. In a sense, he was comparable to a volcano about to erupt as no one is able to accurately predict a dormant volcano's destructive power.

Caught, Yu Zhitong's best option for him was to comply with all of Han Li's demands without testing his patience with riddles or trickery. The last thing he wanted was to anger Han Li and suffer from his rash actions.

"I want you to honestly tell me everything concerning what you are and exactly how you came to know Doctor Mo. Right now, the only resource I have in my disposal is time, so I will listen to all you have to say." As he spoke, Han Li seemed to be wearing a mask, his face hiding all emotional fluctuations from Yu Zhitong's wary perception.

Chapter 58: Immortal Practitioner

“Kek! Speaking of which, I am also a victim.”

The moment he opened his mouth to speak, Yu Zhitong tried to get Han Li's sympathy, doing his best to downplay the relationship between him and Doctor Mo, even to the point of breaking all ties. However, his act was in vain. Han Li was not moved at all! Without much of a option, Yu Zhitong had no choice but to continue explaining.

“Originally, I was an Immortal Practitioner”

Yu Zhitong honestly told Han Li about his history, explaining every details about the circumstances from how he got to know Doctor Mo to how he ended up in his current state. Of course, in his tale, he made himself out to be the victim in the story, pushing all responsibilities and negative connotations on to the head of the dead Doctor Mo. After all, dead men tell no tales.

Han Li naturally would not completely believe what he had said. But comparing the story he just heard, alongside with Doctor Mo's words back when he was still alive, Han Li deduced that about 70-80% of the story he just heard was true. It was highly improbable but not totally impossible for the circumstances to occur as they had.

After removing parts of the story that seemed inconceivable, Han Li already had a rough understanding of the truth.

From what Han Li understood, regarding his past, Doctor Mo had no reason to lie to him. The stories he heard from Doctor Mo, that he got ambushed and decided to search for ways to regain his original powers and appearance, should be true. There was no need for Doctor Mo to lie to him about that.

However, Han Li recalled that Doctor Mo told him earlier that he discovered a mysterious book that outlined a way to regain his vitality. After considering all that transpired, Han Li decided that the story was false, because it does not match with what Yu Zhitong had said! Ultimately, Doctor managed to regain his youth because of Yu Zhitong,

yet, he was also cursed because of Yu Zhitong.

Originally, Yu Zhitong was a member of a cultivation clan. He had managed to cultivate the Eternal Spring Arts to the 7th level. It could be said that he had some expertise, but ultimately, because of his limited talent, he made no advancement in the Eternal Sprint Arts and thus was unable to meet the requirements to enter the Foundation Building Stage.

Cultivators who were not at the Foundation Building Stage could not be considered cultivators at all. At most, they could only be considered powerful mortals, halfway to the point of stepping into the realm of immortal cultivators. Because Yu Zhitong was unable to achieve a breakthrough, he decided to explore the secular world for enlightenment, hoping to make a breakthrough in his state of heart, overcoming the bottleneck that forbade him from reaching Foundation Building Stage!

Of course, he hoped that he would be able to come across rare precious herbs so that he could concoct spiritual pills to aid him in his cultivation. However, he knew that the chance was slim at best; no matter what, it was a matter of luck

With high hopes and expectations in his head, the 20 year old Yu Zhitong arrived at the place cultivators called the “secular world.”

The captivating world out there was full of wondrous events and distractions, causing Yi Zhitong to be dazzled and lost in their splendor. His original state of mind could not be regarded as solidly stable; In less than a few years, it had already degraded! He became nothing more than an influential clan’s honored guest and began to enjoy the world’s luxurious splendors. As a result, his immortal’s heart had gradually weakened.

Regarding traitors of the clan, after a 100 years, disciples like Yu Zhitong would have their names formally removed from the clan registry. The act of doing so was equivalent to declaring that the traitorous disciples would have no more connections to the clan and would be considered a mortal. Disciples like Yu Zhitong would never be able to return to the clan. Unless one of his direct descendants had an enormous

potential to walk the path of an immortal cultivator, he would not be allowed to return.

If this carried on, Yu Zhitong would have lost the chance to cultivate, but living a life of decadence and wallowing in riches would still be highly possible. This was an extremely common occurrence for cultivators who failed to break through to the stage of Foundation Building, so there was nothing to make a fuss of.

One day, it was unknown whether the heavens were helping him or if Lady Luck decided to smile on him, but as Yu Zhitong was strolling the streets of the city, he decided to enter a spiritual pharmacy on a whim. To his surprise, he actually spotted a rarely seen and extremely beneficial spiritual herb there. The name of the spiritual herb was known as the “Blood Spirit Grass.” For those who were not familiar with herbs, it was extremely common for them not to recognise this since the external appearance of this grass was about 95% similar to the “Blood Sweat Grass”. Who knew that the ignorant shopkeeper would actually place the two grasses together.

Yu Zhitong was naturally exulted as he saw the “Blood Spirit Grass”. With this spiritual herb, it would greatly increase his chances of breaking through the bottleneck. Ingesting the spiritual herb was akin to fanning flames; the sparks in his immortal’s heart gradually started to blaze again.

Who would have known that just when he was about to purchase the herb, another immortal practitioner also entered the shop. Seeing such a beneficial spiritual herb in front of him, he fought with Yu Zhitong over the purchase of the Spirit Blood Grass.

Seeing this situation, the shop owner offered them a solution. The herb would be sold to the one who offered the highest bid. Eventually, Yu Zhitong managed to win the bidding war by a narrow margin.

After winning, he hurriedly left the store. He knew that the other practitioner would not give up so easily. Yu Zhitong was in a panic, and decided that returning to his clan was the safest way to proceed. But half

way on the road, the other practitioner caught up to him and a huge battle began.

The other practitioner was stronger than him and thus Yu Zhitong ended up suffering a miserable defeat. Yet, he was still unwilling to relinquish the spiritual herb. Gritting his teeth, Yu Zhitong decided to use his last resort: he took out his only remaining treasure bestowed on him by his clan, putting on a deceptively brave front by showing a fake intent to perish together with his opponent. This way, Yu Zhitong managed to scare the other practitioner away.

Even though he had achieve victory, the current him was riddled with injuries. It was at this moment where he met Doctor Mo, who had also been trying to find a remedy for himself.

With his lack of experience, Yu Zhitong did not know the saying that human hearts are tough to fathom, and he stupidly revealed the fact that he was carrying an extremely beneficial spiritual herb.

Just like that, Yu Zhitong invited a calamity upon himself. He did not know that Doctor Mo was desperately searching for a cure for his own injuries. Now that he knew there might be an efficacious spiritual herb on Yu Zhitong's body which might have the chance to save him, he exhausted all his methods trying to obtain the herb from Yu Zhitong.

However, how could Yu Zhitong agree? He too needed the miraculous effects of the herbs to recover from his injuries. The current him was no different from an ordinary mortal.

Seeing that his efforts of negotiation was unsuccessful, hatred formed in his heart. Doctor Mo calm himself and appeared to accept his fate with a sigh. He was cunning and could afford to wait for a good opportunity. Doctor Mo decided to poison Yu Zhitong to death.

In normal circumstances, ordinary poisons would all be ineffective against Yu Zhitong. However, the poison Doctor Mo administered was an unusual poison with no antidote!

Already suffering from heavy injuries, Yu Zhitong now had the potent poison to contend with. Struggling with every movement, he appeared to

be on the verge of dying. It was at this moment that Doctor Mo revealed himself and walked swaggeringly towards Yu Zhitong.

Only now did Yu Zhitong understood what had happened. There was no way he would allow Doctor Mo to succeed just like that. Even in such dire circumstances, he must find a way to persist longer! Under great anger, he had no choice but to utilize the “Blood Soul Curse”, transmuting all the blood essence and spiritual energy in his body into a blood curse, spitting it on Doctor’s Mo;s face. After which, Yu Zhitong’s soul swiftly departed his body.

After his soul departed his body, only did Yu Zhitong realised that he had made a mistake. He had forgotten to prepare a soul binding treasure, so there was no item that could temporarily house his soul! With no choice, he had to enter Doctor Mo’s body. After all souls without something to tether them would inevitably dissipate.

As the blood curse splattered on Doctor Mo’s face, he was terrified, but after he calmed down and realised that nothing strange is going to happen, he relaxed his guard and stopped thinking about it.

Based on his rudimentary knowledge of medicinal pills, he searched Yu Zhitong’s corpse and immediately consumed any pills he could find. As expected, pills from a immortal practitioner were unusually effective. After he consumed the pills, Doctor Mo’s Internal Qi was restored.

Doctor Mo laughed crazily, and took Yu Zhitong’s belongings, including the Eternal Spring Arts, which he could not understand. Before he left, Doctor Mo decided to make a comeback and gain revenge on all his enemies after his injuries recovered.

Chapter 59: The Three Big Inviolable Rules

Doctor Mo did not have many happy days. The Mortality Decimation Curse revealed its deadly side effects, causing him to age at the rate of one year for every passing day.

He was terrified at the rate he was aging and tried everything to find a way to control the abnormal effects of the curse, but there was little to no success.

He knew that if this continued on, he would not live for much longer, as his body would begin to fail him and he would eventually die like any other old man. Yu Zhitong, on the other hand, was in even more pain. When his soul entered Doctor Mo's body, it was slowly but painfully being assimilated into Doctor Mo's soul.

Assimilation, a passive event, would occur if one's soul remained in a foreign body for a prolonged period of time. Since one body can contain only one consciousness, the stronger soul would try to subdue the weaker soul, thus beginning the long process of assimilation.

Yu Zhitong decided out of desperation to reveal everything he knew concerning why they wanted Han Li's body. He was reluctant to do so not because he was good at heart loyal to Doctor Mo but rather because he was fearful of the cultivation world's Three Big Inviolable Rules.

First, cultivators must not forcefully possess the bodies of normal mortals as they were unable to withstand the immense amount of stress, causing the body to ultimately burn out.

Second, only those with greater magic power will be able to successfully overtake the body of a cultivator with weaker magic power and not suffer from any form of counterattack. The greater the disparity between the levels of power, the safer it would be for the one attempting the possession.

Third, a cultivator is only able to perform body possession once in his entire life, no matter how powerful their magic power is. If they were to attempt to perform body possession a second time, their soul will perish

without fail.

Although the number of people who tried to break the three rules is unknown, the Three Big Inviolable Rules have never been broken. These three rules limited countless evil cultivators who tried to use the body possession technique and prevented them from creating calamity in the mortal world. The Heavens frowned upon actions that go against Heaven's Will because no matter what, the Heavens would not allow cultivators to throw the world into chaos.

If Doctor Mo had been a cultivator, Yu Zhitong would not be in his current predicament as he would have had a viable chance at possessing Doctor Mo's body but since Doctor Mo was a normal mortal without a hint of Spiritual Qi, there was no way for Yu Zhitong to possess his body for fear that halfway through the possession, Doctor Mo's body would be unable to handle the stress and ultimately break down.

Even if Yu Zhitong was able to find another body to possess, the process of assimilation was inevitable and he might fall under a more dire predicament as every time he leaves and enters a new body, he loses a bit of his Spiritual Qi, which will quickly be expended. When this happens, Yu Zhitong will no longer be able to enter and exit someone's body at will and may even be indefinitely stuck in someone's body and ultimately be assimilated.

It is also important to note that without a body, he was unable to replenish his magic power through meditation, so every time he used magic power it was lost forever. At the same time, his magic power also leaked out at a slow but steady pace and even he didn't know how long his soul could maintain its current form.

So unless Yu Zhitong found a cultivator capable of using small amounts of magic power and had a body capable of withstanding possession, he would not take any risks and leave his current body, which was that of Doctor Mo.

Just when Doctor Mo's body was about breakdown because of the blood curse, the aftermath would leave Yu Zhitong's soul without a body to lodge

in.

After the collapse of Doctor Mo's body under the blood curse, leaving him without a body to return to, and the fact that Han Li may consume his remaining life force, Yu Zhitong decided to temporarily place aside his hatred and give Han Li anything he wanted, even going as far as betraying Doctor Mo, revealing how they met and their plans, along with the stakes and benefits involved, without holding anything back.

When Doctor Mo first heard of Yu Zhitong's plan for revitalizing his body, it made him express anger, but he quickly realized that this was a perfect opportunity and quickly pledged to achieve their goal, revealing him to be a man of dignity.

First, Doctor Mo must follow Yu Zhitong's instructions and control his consciousness so that it does not assimilate his soul. Yu Zhitong also taught Doctor Mo a few secret techniques that allowed him to slow down the rate of aging he suffered from his curse while also temporarily allowing him to use magic power.

Then Doctor Mo must find someone with strong spiritual roots who was also able to practice the Eternal Spring Arts, teach him the incantation and then wait for when the time was right before Doctor Mo used his temporarily gained abilities to use magic power to forcefully take over the other person's body in order to start a new life.

Doctor Mo's sincere desire to traverse the path of cultivation was ridiculed constantly by Yu Zhitong since he knew firsthand how impossible it was for normal mortals to use magic power so he was just a mortal cultivator of the mouth with no spiritual roots in his body.

(TL: "cultivator of the mouth" means he only talks about cultivating without actually doing it.)

After Doctor Mo succeeded in overtaking a body with spiritual roots and had sufficient time to rest he would then proceed to help Yu Zhitong find a suitable body to possess and then provide any aid to help Yu Zhitong possess his new body.

From the conditions above it seems like Doctor Mo receives the most

benefits from this deal, but that couldn't be helped since Yu Zhitong was caught in a bad position with his remaining soul force under constant threat of assimilation. In the end, Yu Zhitong was forced to accept this unfavorable agreement and take a bit of loss. However, it was not clear if he really was taking a loss; after all, the only person who knew the exact terms of the agreement was himself.

At one point, Yu Zhitong suggested that Doctor Mo should go back to his family and ask for help, but the rapidly aging man refused to even consider that option, much to Yu Zhitong's constant annoyance.

What came afterwards didn't warrant much discussion as Doctor Mo spent most of his time trying unsuccessfully to look for a suitable body and reluctantly entered the Seven Mysteries Sect, where he accepted Han Li as a disciple and taught him the Eternal Spring Arts. The rest that occurred was not worth mentioning as they were either mentioned by Doctor Mo himself or was experienced by Han Li himself.

After Han Li finished hearing those words, he let out a long sigh as some of the confusions and questions within his heart were answered by Yu Zhitong. Seeing how Yu Zhitong did not continue, Han Li's face grew darker and he coldly said, "It seems you still haven't told me how Doctor Mo died."

Yu Zhitong hesitantly opened his mouth and said "Is there else worth explaining? Doctor Mo underestimated your cultivation speed of the Eternal Spring Arts and his magic power was not as strong as yours, so therefore he was unable to take over your body, resulting in his soul being devoured."

"So, the yellow ball of light that first entered my body was Doctor Mo and the second green ball of light was you," Han Li stated calmly, almost as if the invasion of his body had not been a big deal.

"Well... about this, at that time I thought that both you and Doctor Mo were exhausted and I did not want to waste this opportunity and so I thought I might borrow your body for a bit," Yu Zhitong replied awkwardly.

“Heng! I’m afraid that’s not the reason why you attacked. I think that you had it all planned out from the beginning.”

“Yu Zhitong, I bet that when you were first explained the process of body possession to Doctor Mo, you didn’t have any good intentions and therefore didn’t bother to mention that the success rate of body possession was directly correlated to the strength difference.

“Do you know what I think? I think that you had it all planned out from the beginning. You made Doctor Mo use the self-mutilating Seven Soul Devouring Technique against my fourth level cultivation of the Eternal Spring Arts, which are near equal in terms of power, so that we would both become exhausted to the point of perishing together. After the battle came to a draw, you would then step in and reap the benefits of Doctor Mo’s painstaking work and ultimately take over my body. Did I guess correctly, Cultivator Yu?” Han Li calmly stated his assumptions in the time it takes for several breaths.

After a long moment of silence, Yu Zhitong let out a sigh expressing his dejection. Without refuting, he said “I originally wanted to give you empty praises but now I sincerely mean it when I say that you are extraordinarily smart, even outshining your master Mo Juren, that cunning fox.”

“You guessed correctly. All of this was planned out by me, but I never would have thought that your talent for cultivation was so high that you would train up to the sixth layer of the Eternal Spring Arts, only one layer below me, in such a short period of time. Not only did you easily swallow Doctor Mo’s soul, but my heavily depleted soul force was not even a match for you and I even lost a large portion of my soul to you.”

Once finished, his tone suddenly turned prideful “Ha! That Mo Juren was only a normal mortal yet he wanted to stand on equal footing with us cultivators. Was he even worthy?

“Moreover he dared use such despicable means as to get rid of my cultivating body and still wanted to step onto the path of cultivation! He was simply daydreaming!” The hatred Yu Zhitong had kept bottled in his

heart for a long time finally revealed itself.

“But you are different, you were born with spiritual roots and intelligence above the norm. Staying in the secular world would be too much of a pity! If you are willing to help me find a new and suitable body, I am willing to act as your guide, introduce you to the elders of my clan, and accept you as my disciple. What do you think?”

Chapter 60: Poison Test

Yu Zhitong was very confident he could sway Han Li since he did not believe that there was anyone who could resist stepping onto the path of cultivators and the temptation of immortality.

He thought back to how Doctor Mo hated him but still ended up working with him and even occasionally tried to get on his good side, believing this would make Yu Zhitong more submissive.

Much to Yu Zhitong's disappointment, after Han Li heard his enticing promise, he did not reveal even a hint of excitement, his face remaining as impassive and unmoving as ever.

"As for the matter of cooperation, we can discuss that later. Right now, I still have one question that I hope you would provide me with a clear answer." Han Li said softly as he calmly stared at the ball of light.

"If I answer this question of yours, then you will be willing to cooperate with me?"

"That depends on your answer and if it is to my satisfaction."

"Okay, ask away!" Yu Zhitong promised immediately and demonstrated his understanding of the concept that 'one must learn how to yield under pressure'.

(TL: 'one must learn how to yield under pressure' is a phrase that means people should know when it is time to yield instead of fighting back)

Han Li did not immediately answer, but instead raised his head up to the ceiling in a contemplative matter as if he were thinking deeply about how he should phrase the question.

Seeing Han Li's solemn face, Yu Zhitong couldn't help but feel a sense of fear creep up within his heart as he himself wondered what kind of headache-inducing question Han Li would ask him.

"I want to know if there are any negative side effects from devouring Doctor Mo and a portion of your own soul because I currently feel a pain in my head almost as if it 's being filled to the point of exploding with

information that I am unable to recognize,” said Han Li, finally mentioning the one worry he had since he had woken up.

After listening this question and realizing that Han Li was worried about such a small problem, Yu Zhitong immediately felt unease in his heart dissipate, and even his voice lightened up.

“Hehe! So you were worried about this. Well, little brother, you worry too much. In fact, you don’t need to put this matter at heart. If you really want to know, the information you feel stuffed into your brain will slowly disappear within a year or two, so you have absolutely nothing to worry about.”

“So what you are saying is that the things I swallowed are absolutely useless and that I am completely unable to hold onto them? I don’t trust you on this,” Han Li said coldly as he glared at the Yu Zhitong with traces of suspicion evident on his face.

“Saying that you can’t even hold onto a bit of it is not actually true, but what you can hold onto is indeed only a small portion of it,” Yu Zhitong quickly added onto his explanation out of fear that Han Li would misunderstand something.

“For example, you will be unable to touch the included memories, experiences, and emotions, and even if you did absorb them, there is a high chance that you will instantly become mentally crippled, your personality will develop split versions of itself, your consciousness will collapse, and your brain will ultimately burst, leading to your death.

“You have to understand that the soul is the most precious thing a person can possess, how can it be so easily combined with other things? It is true that you can absorb someone else’s soul and have it temporarily rest in your subconscious, but to make it your own is simply wishful thinking. Otherwise, if a simple body possession can allow you to absorb all of one’s memories, experiences, Qi techniques, then wouldn’t that cause the whole world to fall into chaos? If things were that simple, then who would honestly practice cultivation along with going out and exploring the different realms of this world when they could obtain all

this through simply possessing someone else's body.

"Once a soul has been consumed, the only thing that can be used is a little bit of the energy the devoured soul has left which could then be used to bolster one's own reservoir of energy for a short amount of time. It's due to the fact that this types of energy escapes the fastest, staying within the body for only a few days before it dissipated along with the devoured soul. Once it's gone, you will be unable to use it."

As Han Li continued to listen to Yu Zhitong's explanation, he slowly put down the last strand of doubt he carried within his heart because he could tell from Yu Zhitong's tone that he was not lying. After all, it became increasingly obvious that Yu Zhitong was seeking out a similar cooperation with Han Li similar to the one that he had with Mo Juren. He knew that Han Li was testing him, so he did not dare to lie.

When Yu Zhitong finished the last sentence of his explanation, he saw Han Li nod his head and couldn't help but feel a sense of relief as he knew that Han Li believed him. At the same time that Yu Zhitong brighten up a bit, he asked hurriedly: "Little Brother Han, it seems like you are satisfied with the answer I provided, so don't you think that now would be a good time to discuss our terms of cooperation?"

"Of course, being able to work with a cultivator is my utmost pleasure!" Han Li said in a sincere tone, flashing a big smile that revealed his white teeth that gleamed in the candlelight.

"Really?" Yu Zhitong asked excitedly in disbelief as he did not even have to try to persuade Han Li, who agreed all by himself.

"Of course" Han Li answered crisply.

Then he pulled something out of his clothes and said to Yu Zhitong in a familiar tone "Now that we are partners, you wouldn't mind doing a small test for me before we discuss any further, right?"

"Test?" Yu Zhitong paused for a moment, before looking at the familiar looking cylindrical object in Han Li's hand while a bad feeling crept back into his heart.

“That correct. More specifically, a poison test”

Han Li uttered these words as he lifted up the cylinder-shaped object before moving his thumb a little, which then caused some black liquid carrying a rancid smell to shoot out straight towards its target.

“Ah!”

Yu Zhitong emitted a sharp and painful scream as the black liquid covered the whole green globe of light. The green globe dimmed significantly, showing that the injury he had received was not light.

“You, you dare attack me, to poison me...” Yu Zhitong screamed hoarsely, still in disbelief as he was unable to accept the event that just transpired.

Han Li did not pay attention to Yu Zhitong’s angry shouts and instead reached for the dagger located on his belt just above his abdomen. He then swiftly unsheathed it with a “shua,” revealing a shiny blade.

The dagger was one of those rarely seen “jade daggers,” which had blades that were incomparably flexible. The dagger in question was as wide as a knuckle and about half a meter long.

Han Li only obtained this double-edged dagger by paying larges amounts of money in order to get the blacksmith to custom-make it according to Han Li’s specifications. Since Han Li did not specialize in weapons, he did not have an opportunity to bring out this dagger during the struggle with Doctor Mo, but it seemed like the time has come for him to use it.

Previously, Han Li had kept this weapon hidden on his body and almost didn’t have an opportunity to use it. His face darkened and his original smile disappeared by half the thought of almost not being able to use the dagger that he paid a large amount of money to obtain.

He looked at the trembling ball of light with apathy and, without saying word, took a flying step forward as he savagely hacked at the green globe as if he were chopping a block of wood.

Chapter 61: Destroying God

Yu Zhitong's soul was stuck in the corner of the room, and just like a fly trapped in a sealed house, it could only randomly smash against the walls. Every time it thought it could escape, the dark liquid would force it back to its corner, causing it to be constantly weakened.

Even though his soul grew weaker because of Han Li's repeated attempts at trying to cut him with his dagger, what really made him despair was the mysterious black liquid that was corroding his soul.

Since the moment the black liquid touched his soul, Yu Zhitong had felt his life essence trickle away, feeble and powerless. It also tore away at the little magic power he had left, which was even deadlier. This prevented Yu Zhitong from performing magic, causing his casted spells to fail repeatedly. It was as if he were completely restricted.

"Why are you trying to kill me? Why...?"

Faced with Han Li's ruthless attacks, the ball of light that was Yu Zhitong released a howl filled with anguish, but Han Li did not care about Yu Zhitong's unwillingness to die.

Not long after, Yu Zhitong became quieter as he gradually weakened until he was finally unable to emit a sound or show a hint of movement.

Seeing Yu Zhitong's stillness, Han Li did not immediately stop his attack. Instead, he continued to observe the ball of light, which had dimmed until it resembled the weak flame of a candle.

After a while, Han Li gave a cold answer:

"I would never believed you, who are so despicable that you would easily and willingly swear a poisonous oath that condemned your family and ancestors to a gruesome death under Heaven's wrath. If I did work with you, then I would following Doctor Mo to his death."

With a chilling glare, he gave Yu Zhitong's flickering soul one last glance before turning around, and without hesitation, he swiftly pushed open the heavy door.

With the door thrown open, a few sharp rays of sunlight shot inside and landed on the globe of light. Upon contact with the the dying soul, the sunlight burned Yu Zhitong's last remaining soul force, causing it to turn into a curl of smoke that promptly disappeared into the air with a "Pu!"

With this, the last of trace of Yu Zhitong was cleanly wiped away from this world by Han Li.

To say that Han Li knew that Yu Zhitong feared the light was not exactly true. he first thought of this idea when he recalled how Mo Juren, upon entering the room, quickly blew out several candles. If he did not remember this event then he would still be hacking at the globe of light to no avail, causing him an immeasurable worry to arise in his heart.

Although Han Li had eliminated Yu Zhitong's life essence with ease, he had prepared an extra tube of Seven Poison Water in advance in case his plan didn't work.

Compared to the Five Poison Water, which Mo Juren took away from him, this second tube contained extra ingredients that greatly increased its potency. One of the added materials was the Flowered Mushroom which was extremely deadly to normal mortals and even more effective against immortal cultivators. The effect of its potency could be seen in how Yu Zhitong was unable to use magic, allowing his soul to be easily destroyed.

This was the reason why Han Li splashed some Seven Poison Water on Yu Zhitong's soul. From his research of a variety of legends, there was a visible trend that ghosts, monsters, demons, and the like are afraid of chicken blood, black dog blood, and other similar bodily fluids, so in this case, Han Li treated Yu Zhitong as a ghost.

By guessing randomly and through pure coincidence did Han Li manage to kill Yu Zhitong, if Yu Zhitong knew that his death was based on speculation, he would have died again from vomiting.

Han Li was not clear about all the effects of his Seven Water Poison but he was certain that when he opened the door, Yu Zhitong would die without fail, and it was only with this fact reassuring him that he acted

so mercilessly and ruthlessly.

Now he was finally free and did not have to live a life of constant worry about a knife placed at his throat nor did he have to be ready to flee at a moment's notice.

Han Li calmly strode back to the center of the stone room where he stayed for a moment before he suddenly jumped up a good three meters and opened his mouth to shout out his heart's joys. After he finished releasing his pent up emotions, he finally returned back to the childish nature of a 16 year-old.

"I'm finally free!"

"I'm finally free!"

"I'm.." Han Li's voice was suddenly cut short almost as if a knife had swiftly descended on him when he saw the giant man standing in the doorway to the stone room. It was the giant man who Mo Juren referred to as "Iron Slave".

Han Li's face immediately became ugly and unsightly as he stared at the giant figure in front of him. He suddenly felt his shoulders ache as he realized that he had committed a huge mistake and that was he had forgotten about the giant man's existence and therefore forgot to ask Yu Zhitong about the Mo Juren's and the giant man's relationship along with his weakness.

The only consolation Han Li had was the fact that the giant man did not show any interest in the stone room and continued to wander around the premise of the door, still following Mo Juren's final command without throwing a single glance into the open room.

Han Li couldn't help but furrow his eyebrow as he thought that the Iron Slave was the hardest type of person to deal with since it did not listen to reason or persuasion and would only follow orders given by its master. The other problem was that if Han Li couldn't defeat him in battle and the only thing that stood a chance of winning was the poison he concocted. However the cylinder that once held the poison now lay empty on the floor.

This thought caused Han Li to pace back and forth in the stone room, scrambling to think of a plan to deal with the Iron Slave, but after a lot of thinking, his mind was in a mess and he still did not have a plan.

Inadvertently, Han Li's gaze fell upon Mo Juren's dead body.

Suddenly, he had an idea.

"Maybe I can find something on his body that can be used to restrain the Iron Slave," Han Li immediately thought.

He quickly glanced outside and saw that the Iron Slave was still pacing back and forth with no signs of tiredness or an intent to go near the stone room.

Seeing this, Han Li calmed down a bit as he quickly walked up to Mo Juren's body and shamelessly stretched out both of Doctor Mo's arms to begin carefully examining every inch of his dead corpse.

Chapter 62: Deal

Han Li removed all kinds of weird oddities one by one from Mo Juren's body. Some were items that he recognized while others were foreign to him. He sorted these objects in two piles that he placed next to him.

While sorting out all the objects, Han Li had a fair share of surprises, causing him to exclaim a few times. The amount of objects Mo Juren carried on his self was not small, and some were even dangerous and life threatening objects.

A tube of some mysterious poison

A bag of sand dipped in lethal snake venom.

Ten or so incredibly sharp boomerangs.

As the number of items on the floor increased, the more panicked and unsettled Han Li became. He realized how lucky he had been when battling against Mo Juren. If the other had not wanted to capture him alive, Han Li would have most likely died.

After wiping away the cold sweat from his face, Han Li laughed mockingly to himself: "Me, a living man, is afraid of a dead man's possessions".

After removing all the items from Mo Juren's body he started to carefully sift through all the suspicious looking items.

"This small bottle is so foul-smelling, but it must be some kind of antidote, so it should be okay."

"This weird looking weapon looks oddly similar to a wheel, and even though I don't know what it's used for, it shouldn't be related to the Iron Slave, so I'll first put it to the side."

"As for this spice bag..."

Han Li continued to fiddle and inspect each item while talking aloud to himself, making it seem as if he was in high spirits when suddenly he found himself holding a small bag.

Within his hands was a normal looking spice bag that, under normal circumstances, would not catch the eyes of others. However, Han Li knew that since it was on Mo Juren's body, it would not be anything but simple.

Han Li weighed the small spice bag in his hands in hopes of gaining insight on its contents but he only noticed that the bag was exceedingly light and could not possibly contain anything heavy. After weighing it for a second time, he felt that there might be a paper-like object, or something similar, hidden within the small bag.

Han Li prepared himself mentally before opening the bag, and just as he expected, he saw several sheets of paper tucked inside.

He glanced at the paper and noticed that it was written in Mo Juren's handwriting, which caused a heavy feeling to weigh down his heart. After briefly skimming the paper, he did a double take as he re-read the note and realized that it was Mo Juren's personal will.

Han Li felt bewildered, and due to his curiosity, he carefully read the contents on the few pieces of paper.

After he finished reading, Han Li lifted his head upward and stared for a long time before releasing a heavy sigh. Furrowing his brows, he felt an extremely heavy weight descend over his heart.

With his hands clasped together on the back of his head, he looked like an old man as he paced aimlessly. He would first walk two steps then stop and ponder upon something. After realizing he couldn't fully grasp his thought, he would continue to pace a few steps before stopping once again to think.

Just like this, Han Li continued to pace around, mimicking a donkey circling around Mo Juren's body. His face became unsettled; one moment it was bright red, and the next it would turn white, showing the raging emotions he felt within himself, unable to be pacified.

If Li Feiyu saw Han Li's unstable mindset, he would probably mock him with loud ridicule.

The reason for Han Li's change was Mo Juren's will, which left behind

some extremely terrible news that left him with one of two difficult choices. Within the antidote for Insect Corpse Pill that Mo Juren had previously given him was a rare type of poison that could only be removed by his family's Yang Jaded Treasure. Apart from this treasure, even legendary antidotes could not save him.

Written on the few sheets of paper, Mo Juren will clearly stated that the poison he used on Han Li was for the worse case scenario that Mo Juren would die from failing to possess Han Li. So, in preparation of any unsettled business he might have after his death, he decided to include one final, simple exchange with Han Li in his will, allowing Han Li and the deceased doctor to benefit greatly. Mo Juren would be able to take care of any unsettled business while Han Li would be able to gain a large amount of wealth and an indescribable amount of benefits.

As for whether Yu Zhitong would be the last one alive, Mo Juren did not give it a second thought. He only briefly mentioned him in his will, saying that Yu Zhitong was weak by nature and afraid of death, and although he was a bit smart, that was the extent of his current capabilities. Mo Juren also mentioned that even though Yu Zhitong was an immortal cultivator, he would never become anything great, and for this reason he was quickly disregarded as being the last person alive.

Once Han Li saw this, he laughed bitterly in his heart at how Mo Juren did not predict that in the end, he would fall into the trap of the innocent looking Yu Zhitong. If Han Li had not hid his real Eternal Spring Arts cultivation level, he would most likely have ended up like Mo Juren, allowing Yu Zhitong to receive all the benefits. Of course, Mo Juren had also planned to achieve his fantasies of becoming an immortal cultivator by taking over Han Li's body. It seemed like no matter what kind of cultivator one became, one must not underestimate others.

In his will, the trade Mo Juren proposed was very simple. He wrote that in a year or two, the poison would become effective. To remove this poison, Han Li must make a trip to Mo Juren's home. Mo Juren had wives and daughters, along with a decently sized business. He had made arrangements for them before he left, but he feared that if he were absent

for an extended period of time, his enemies would have evil intent against his family. For this reason, Han Li must rush to protect his wives and family members before the situation escalated and preferably help them escape from the bloody world that is Jiang Hu so that they can live a normal life without want.

As a way of compensating and removing any of Han Li's suspicions, Mo Juren's will betrothed one of his daughters to him and gave him a dowry of one half of all his assets along with the Yang Jaded Treasure.

Before Mo Juren left, he had given the precious jade to his first wife for safekeeping and also explicitly told her that it was to be used as part of their daughter's dowry, so even if Han Li did not want to wed his daughter, he would be forced to.

Of course, Mo Juren clearly pointed out that his enemies' clans were very large and influential. They also contained many cultivators. The sheer number of members made it hard for the clans to supervise and control all of their members, and with Han Li's current abilities, he wouldn't be capable of dealing with them head on. For this reason, he specifically prepared two false identities for Han Li and carefully hid them in a secret location unknown to anyone besides Mo Juren. Furthermore, he even left behind a token belonging to Mo Juren and a handwritten letter. At the same time, he also left a list of names that clearly stated his trusted aides, those he suspected of plotting against him, and the names of his enemy clans within his letter. He also wrote out several things Han Li must take note of.

Finally, to express the sincerity of his will, he even left behind how to control and summon the Iron Slave and the Cloud Winged Bird.

What caught Han Li's attention was how Mo Juren vaguely pointed out the fact that the Iron Slave was actually a soulless corpse whose soul has already left this world plane. After reading this, Han Li didn't know how he should feel about Mo Juren treating him will in so that Han Li wouldn't feel bad about being used.

Even so, ignore the poison within his body, saying the Han Li's heart

was not moved when facing such a large sum of money would be an outright lie. Han Li had always been sensitive to money and was therefore very interested in Mo Juren's proposal. As for the betrothal to Mo Juren's daughter, Han Li felt an odd feeling well up within himself. He was around the age when he would experience his first set of romantic thoughts. Furthermore, he knew from Mo Juren's original appearance that his daughter could not be anything but beautiful.

But the risk he faced was no small matter. If he was not careful, he might end up having to pay with his life. Mo Juren's enemies are not simple characters!

Mo Juren had carefully constructed a watertight plan to take care of any unsettled business, using the chance to start a new life filled with beautiful women and immense wealth as a collective incentive in order to tie Han Li to Mo Juren's family, effectively mixing safety and danger together and forcing Han Li to swallow this honey-wrapped poison pill.

(TL: "Honey-wrapped poison pill" means a situation that looks appealing but contains many hidden dangers)

Chapter 63: True Appearance

Han Li paced around the room several times before stopping.

“Should I accept Doctor Mo’s deal right now, or should I wait I’m absolutely sure there is no cure before making my decision...” Han Li was helpless, unable to come to a conclusion.

Then, he looked outside at the Iron Slave and thought back at the unintelligible chant left behind at the end of Mo Juren’s will. A sense of curiosity rose within his heart as he prepared the steps to control the Iron Slave.

Han Li bent down and retrieved from within the pile of items a brass watch small enough to fit in the palm of his hand. The brass watch was delicately crafted with harmonious proportions that made it look pleasing to the eyes. With one glance, he could tell that it was the work of a skilled artisan. The only difference this watch had from an ordinary one was the watch frame, which had faint traces of blood stains, making it particularly eyecatching.

Han Li carefully inspected all the features of this so called “Soul Luring Watch.” From its surface, he was unable to see what was so special about it, but by following Mo Juren’s structions, he could control the frightening Iron Slave. Such an object was inconceivable!

Han Li held onto the small watch with his left hand and a dagger with his right hand. Slowly and cautiously, he walked out past the stone door and approached the Iron Slave.

When he was twenty feet away from the large man, he stopped walking, unwilling to move any further. If he moved even one foot closer, he might not be able to protect himself from any accidents. At this moment, the Iron Slave was standing straight with his back faced towards Han Li.

“Dang!” A crisp and clear sound rang out from the watch after Han Li used his dagger to softly hit the copper watch.

Han Li briefly wrinkled his eyebrows. The sound was the same as that

of a normal clock, so how could it possibly control the Iron Slave?

His heart wavered slightly. His body shrank down a little as he prepared himself to run back to the stone room at the first signs of failure.

Hearing the ringing from the watch, the Iron Slave's shoulder shook almost imperceptibly. Seeing this reaction, Han Li felt delighted, and he quickly continued to strike the watch.

"Dang! Dang!..." The watch sounded out in quick succession and the Iron Slave's body shuddered accordingly until even his walking became staggered, unable to stand firmly, causing him to finally fall face down on the ground, unconscious.

The Iron Slave's immense body, upon impact with the ground, unsettled a large amount of dust that caused the unprepared Han Li to sneeze consecutively, making him look battered and dirtied.

But at this time, Han Li could care less about his appearance. He quickly pounced on the Iron Slave and reached his hands out to tear away the his cloak, revealing a bloated face that shocked and absolutely horrified Han Li.

Han Li forcefully endured the uncomfortable feeling within his heart, unwilling to continue to inspect the Iron Slave any more. Using his dagger to lightly cut open his own wrist, Han Li allowed some of his blood to flow out unobstructed, dripping onto the Iron Slave's face until his face was completely smeared with blood before Han Li found a clean strip of clothing to tie around his wrist in order to prevent further bleeding. Then he calmly stood to the side to watch the Iron Slave's reaction.

Then, strangely enough, all the blood on the Iron Slave's face slowly sank into his skin without a single drop left behind, causing Han Li, who was watching off to the side, to be dumbstruck to the point where he was oblivious to the fact that he exerted too much pressure on the wound, causing fresh blood to seep out of underneath the cloth.

Once the blood was completely absorbed, the Iron Slave opened both eyes and slowly got up. He looked incapable of speech; both his eyes seemed lifeless, without a trace of emotion.

But when the Iron Slave turned his head to look at Han Li and their eyes made contact, Han Li heard a “weng” sound within his mind. A strangely foreign yet familiar feeling arose within Han Li’s heart, almost as if something foreign suddenly appeared within his heart. This feeling was like a pet he personally raised, constantly revolving around Han Li, longing for its name to be called out.

(TL: weng= onomatopoeia for buzzing or droning)

Han Li was surprised but immediately calmed down because he saw that the Iron Slave’s once rigid and deadpan face was now filled with complete obedience. Seeing this gave Han Li the feeling that he was able to control the Iron Slave’s fate. It was a fascinating and novel feeling.

Han Li suppressed his pleasant surprise and calmly gave the large man a command to test his limits.

“Go and tear that stone wall for me.”

Without saying a single word, the Iron Slave walked over to the stone door with a few large strides, raised his two fists together above his head like a large hammer, and with three to five strokes smashed apart the door. As swift as a wind, he returned to Han Li’s side, awaiting his next command.

Han Li, who had been downcast from reading Mo Juren’s will, could not resist anymore and grinned widely from ear to ear. With this strong helper always waiting for orders, would there be any normal dangers in the future capable of harming him?

Han Li was thinking about his wonderful future while he fervently sized the giant man from head to toe.

The more he looked at the giant man, the happier he felt. His originally ugly view of the man now seemed more pleasing to the eye, even going as resembling a familiar face to Han Li.

“A familiar face?” Han Li was both frightened and shocked by his own realization.

How could he think that this ugly face looked familiar when it was his

first time seeing it?

Faced with these questions, Han Li started to closely investigate the giant man's nose and eyes in an attempt to find the answer.

Gradually, he discovered that if he were to take the giant man's bloated face and shrink it to its original size, this face would not be considered ugly to look at. In fact, the Iron Slave's face would even look honest and straightforward, giving Han Li a sight he found both familiar and horrifying.

Han Li's face turned pale. After half a day of silence, he reached out both hands to gently touch the giant man's face.

"Brother Zhang, is that really you?" His words sounded downcast making him appear to be tranquil.

The face he had pieced together was remarkably similar to that of his good friend, "Zhang Tie." Thinking back to Doctor Mo's last few ineffable words, Han Li was completely sure that the giant man and Zhang Tie were somehow closely related. Was it really as it was described in the letter? If the giant man was made from Zhang Tie's empty body, then his soul was already long gone. But how did his body become so huge and frightening?

Chapter 64: Crooked Soul

Han Li used his hand to feel the giant man's body temperature while staring into his lifeless and inarticulate pair of eyes. Within his heart, he was trying to guess all the bitter experiences Zhang Tie had experienced.

Doctor Mo had most likely colluded with Yu Zhitong to kidnap Zhang Tie, a Way of the Armored Elephant practitioner, giving the false pretense that he left and tricking the numerous eyes and ears within the Seven Mysteries Sect. Then, they secretly used some kind of spell to remove Zhang Tie's soul, causing his body to become as grotesque as it was now. The effects of their spell were similar to that of the backlash from cultivating the Way of the Armored Elephant.

Han Li's guess was not very different from what had actually transpired.

After administering his test, Doctor Mo suddenly had the idea of combining the Way of the Armored Elephant with Yu Zhitong's Corpse Refining Technique to create a group of subservient and powerful puppets that could sweep across Jiang Hu. However, he was only able to create this one soldier who Doctor Mo treated as his treasure. He usually kept the Iron Giant hidden somewhere at the bottom of the mountains, and the only time Doctor Mo took the Iron Giant out of hiding was when he returned to the mountain.

But Yu Zhitong was not the least bit interested in this dubious reanimated corpse; in fact, he even snorted disdainfully because when he still had his body, he had been capable of using Qi to deal with these kinds of reanimated corpses without much difficulty. In addition, this animated corpse was incomparable to high ranked reanimated corpses of cultivators; as a result, it was only useful in the mortal world. The only positive side was that the materials were easier to gather, the process of refining was simpler, and anyone with a little bit of Internal Qi could use this technique.

After a while, Han Li removed his hand from the giant man's face and turned his unsettled eyes away from his body. His gaze landed upon the

destroyed stone door, his mind still in a daze.

In that moment, he felt his heart grow cold, not because of Zhang Tie's situation but rather because of his own cold and detached attitude.

He originally thought that when he found out about his friends' miserable downfall, he would furiously lift his head up and shout out, "Mo Juren! Yu Zhitong" with intense hatred.

But in actuality, aside from some sadness, his discovery did not stir up any fury, almost as if the one who fell under these circumstances was not his good friend Zhang Tie but rather a stranger who was not related to him in any way.

Was it because he knew that the Zhang Tie in front of him was only an empty shell and not the Zhang Tie he once knew? Or was it because his heart had become too cold?

Han Li's cold and detached behavior caused fear to manifest in his heart. He realized right then that he had changed too much to the point where he was foreign to himself!

Han Li finally awoke from his stupor and looked at the giant man with eyes filled with turmoil, unsure of how to address "him".

Thinking of what Doctor Mo said about a "lost soul" and a "walking corpse," Han Li gazed through forlorn eyes and softly said, "Brother Zhang, I imagine you have moved on to the next life, so you have no need for your body. Please allow your little brother to use it! I will definitely be careful, and I hope that you will not blame me for my actions."

After saying a few words and finding peace, Han Li faced the giant man and said:

"Since you are the body Brother Zhang left behind and don't have an independent soul of your own, I will call you 'Crooked Soul' ! I hope you can provide me with a helping hand in the future."

Learning to Han Li's words, the giant man stood there stupidly without moving, and aside from looking tame and obedient, there were no hints of reaction. It seemed like he really lacked a consciousness and could only

be commanded into action.

“I can’t believe I am saying these words to body that can’t even think for itself, this is so silly!” Han Li mockingly he shook his head and lightly strolled inside the stone room.

“Crooked Soul, keep up.”

Once Han Li recovered from his downcast state, his expression returned to normal as if he had never been dejected at all. The truth indeed reflected his guess: he had become abnormally cold hearted and rational, not able to be easily disturbed by his own emotions.

Han Li, who was about to step onto the path of cultivation, was unsure of whether this outstanding change would be a source of great calamity or great fortune.

For a short time afterwards, Han Li spent a good half day in order to deal with the aftermath of the situation.

He not only had to bury Doctor Mo’s corpse under some big tree but also had to destroy and throw away all the items in the stone room. He even ordered Crooked Soul to beat up the stone room, tearing everything in the room beyond recognition. Only when he was unable to tell the room’s original appearance was he willing to stop and rest.

After this destruction was over, the day had already transitioned into the evening, and the sun was already setting.

Han Li stood in front of what used to be the stone room, now a stone heap, seizing everything up once and making sure nothing was overlooked before he was satisfied.

“Crooked Soul, let’s go!”

“We still have several matters to take care of tomorrow! It’s a pity you don’t have a conscious and can’t open your mouth to talk; otherwise, I would have someone I can discuss with, which would help make things proceed more smoothly.”

Under the illumination of the setting sun’s fiery red glow, Han Li

dragged along a slender and tall shadow. While walking, Han Li constantly talked to the giant man, whom he referred to as “Crooked Soul.” At last, he found a companion to whom he could confide in without the fear of being complained against. Crooked Soul’s expression was cold and detached, making him similar to that of the leader of a neighborhood gang.

After arranging a hiding place for Crooked Soul, Han Li returned to his own dwelling. Once inside his house, he acted like a man who hasn’t returned back home in a long time, touching and rubbing the chairs and tables, looking everywhere, and talking to himself:

“Ah, Today was an extremely long day! It seems like this day was longer than the first 10 years of my life!”

Abandoning all of his worries, he came crashing down on his bed, covered his head with his pillow, and began falling asleep.

He was very tired! He could not bare the mental and physical exhaustion.

“But, being able to live is truly wonderful!” He couldn’t help thinking this, and as he entered into sleep, the corner of his lips lifted up in a slight smile.

Chapter 65: Medicinal God Han Li

Han Li lay reclined on the chair that Doctor Mo often sat on, and in his hand, he held a book that read "Eternal Spring Arts Incantation" on the leather cover. The contents were indeed from one of the volumes of the Eternal Spring Arts Incantation. He read it with keen interest, engrossed by its contents.

Doctor Mo often held this book in his hands, reading it countless times without growing sick of it. This abnormal situation used to puzzle Han Li. But today, he found out the reason behind Doctor Mo's strange action, which helped him understand that the doctor had not been looking for some method to maintaining his health, but rather he was trying to hardest to comprehend the Eternal Spring Arts Incantation! Doctor Mo had been unwilling to give up on his own inability to cultivate magic power. Instead of placing his complete faith in Yu Zhitong's promises regarding Spiritual Roots, Mo Juren had continued to persist in his attempts to understand the Eternal Spring Arts.

Han Li discovered this secret volume in a secret compartment along with several other items. The book not only contained the first six stages of the chant he had cultivated but also another two stages that he has never seen before. This unexpected discovery caused Han Li to feel greatly excited.

Once Han Li knew that he was cultivating a legendary technique that could call the wind and summon the rain, his thirst for cultivation grew.

After all, who doesn't want to be an immortal deity!

When the sun was precisely in the middle of the sky, warm rays shone down through the broad skylight and landed on Han Li, who was reading comfortably, causing him to squint his eyes into thin cracks.

Han Li slightly lifted up his head to look at the skylight and felt that it was slightly dazzling.

He conveniently used the open book to cover his face and block the

shining light of the sun.

Once he felt the blackness in front of his eyes, his heart felt more comfortable as he once again silently committed the seventh stage of the chant to memory.

He recently discovered that due to his continued use of medicinal assistance, he was about to reach a breakthrough in the Eternal Spring Arts into the seventh stage stage. The earlier he understood the next few stages, the more beneficial it would be for him when he broke through the bottleneck.

More than half year passed since the day Doctor Mo tried to forcibly seize his body.

Two days after the event, in order to cover up Doctor Mo's death, Han Li personally wrote a letter imitating Doctor Mo's handwriting saying that he wanted to return to his hometown to visit his family. Using Doctor Mo's name, he passed on this letter to one of the sect's senior disciples.

Within the letter, he shamelessly used Doctor Mo's tone of voice, claiming that Han Li had succeeded all of Doctor Mo's medicinal expertise and that he could substitute him in seeing and treating patients while Doctor Mo was on his long journey. The fake Doctor Mo was unsure of when he would be back, and so in the letter, he also requested the help of several sect members to temporarily look after his duties until he returned to the Seven Mysteries Sect..

After handing in the letter, several Sect Elders clearly did not show any hints of doubt since Doctor Mo often left the mountain for months on end in order to gather herbs. In addition, Doctor Mo had a respected position within the Seven Mysteries Sect and was venerated for saving Patriarch Wang's life, so he was free to do as he liked.

But several Sect Elders expressed differing opinions concerning the letter's content about how Han Li has succeeded all of Doctor Mo's medicinal expertise. Half believing it while the other half doubted the validity of the letter.

Although most of his patients where sect disciples with small cases of

fevers, knife wounds, and the like, Doctor Mo's main responsibility was to treat the Division Heads, Elders, and other high ranking figures. The majority of the other disciples had to find one of the other few doctors on the mountaintop for treatment.

Thus, at first, several senior members did not immediately allow Han Li to take up Doctor Mo's responsibilities. They first made Han Li treat some disciples in order to test his abilities.

Han Li was not the least bit bothered by other people's doubts regarding his medicinal abilities, and he carried an indifferent attitude for all those he treated. The only reason he proposed to take up Doctor Mo's job was because he fancied the God Hand Valley and its decent medicinal garden.

If he could continue to stay within the mountain valley and let everyone in the mountain valley fall under his control, he would be able to freely use his secret jade bottle in the mountain valley to speed up the growth of rare herbs without fear of other people discovering his secret.

Also even though this small mountain valley was currently inhabited by one person, if Doctor Mo did not come back after a period of time, the Division Heads or Elders might take back the valley on a whim.

As a result, in order to demonstrate his medicinal prowess, Han Li expended large amounts of energy to treat the throngs of disciples who came to look for aid and secretly used the rare herbs whose growth he increased every day. Thus, his medicinal knowledge coupled with his magnanimous use of rare and precious herbs caused those who came to receive medical treatment to believe his ability to create miracles after eating medicine that immediately cured their ailments.

As he predicted, word of his medical ability that was claimed to be able to bring back the dead spread like a loud thunderclap on a clear day, rapidly causing a sensation throughout the whole Seven Mysteries Sect. Everyone on the mountain knew that within their ranks existed a young, talented medicinal god. This medicinal god's abilities were so profound that they were unmeasurable! Under his rescue and medical attention, regardless of whether it was external injuries, internal injuries, or any

other miscellaneous or deadly injuries, the most he needed three days to return a patient to full health. Compared to Doctor Mo's medicinal abilities, Han Li's prowess seemed to soar with great success.

In reality, Han Li's medicinal abilities were more lacking than Doctor Mo's except Doctor Mo would have never squandered so many precious herbs, so he was far surpassed by Han Li when measuring the length of recovery.

Han Li once again helped a seriously injured disciple recover back to full health in a few days. Seeing Han Li's feats, the high ranking figures could not sit any longer. Barely one day passed before they sent someone to invite him over.

This time, the person who wanted to meet him was unexpectedly someone he had met before. It was the Sect Leader Ma who Han Li had met at Bone Refining Cliff.

(Note: Sect Leader Ma appears in Chapter 5 after the Inner Disciples Examinations ended)

This Sect Leader Ma had clearly long forgotten Han Li, a nondescript Unofficial Disciple. Thus, when he met Han Li, he clearly expressed his wish to allow Han Li to take over Doctor Mo's job. Furthermore, Han Li could enjoy all of Doctor Mo's benefits. Of course, Doctor Mo's venerated position could not be given to him yet because Han Li was still too young. At 17 years old, Han Li could not cause others to worship him. But then again, his official monthly salary depended on his position.

In the end, Sect Leader Ma even expressed how if there are anything Han Li was dissatisfied with, he could bring it up and they would take care of it accordingly.

Chapter 66: Eccentric Rule

Sect Leader Ma's generous attitude made it clear to Han Li that as long as any conditions he brought up were not excessive, the sect would most likely deliver it. With the sect's help, his anticipated objective could be easily reached.

But then again, this kind of generous treatment was not often seen in the entire Seven Mysteries Sect. It was obvious that the leaders of the sect were fully aware of the importance a highly talented medicinal god had for cultivators in JiangHu.

As a result, Han Li did not hold back and asked that God Hand Valley would be handed over to be his personal residence. He claimed that he did not want outsiders to disturb him in the valley while he researched and studied the art of healing.

This condition was not one that was naturally accepted by Sect Leader Ma. The Sect Leader probably wanted to rope in Han Li and unexpectedly took the initiative to offer Han Li a young and pretty maid to serve his daily needs.

Han Li, suddenly faced with this unexpected bargaining chip, felt his heartbeat quicken, and just as he was about to tacitly agree, he calmed down and thought of all the secrets he was hiding. Feeling a bit distressed, Han Li rejected the offer.

Han Li's action caused the Sect Leader Ma to show considerable admiration and to view him in a new light. He continued to compliment Han Li, saying that at such a young age, Han Li was quite handsome and that if Sect Leader Ma had a daughter, he would marry her to Han Li.

Han Li didn't know whether to laugh or cry at these words because it wasn't that he rejected feminine charm but that he couldn't afford to at this moment.

And just like this, the entire God Hand Valley became Han Li's private territory. Outsiders were not allowed to casually enter.

Regarding any visitors, Han Li specifically placed a large clock at the entrance of the valley. It didn't matter who wanted to meet Han Li; they just needed to strike the clock, and Han Li would promptly exit the valley to meet them. This eccentric rule was written in bold characters next to the clock, even a few of the middle to upper rank members could not avoid this rule.

The reason why Han Li laid down this eccentric rule was to completely prevent any last possibility of the secret of his bottle from leaking out. As long as no one broke into the mountain valley, Han Li could guarantee the bottle's heaven-defying properties from being known by a second party.

At first, this rule was not an issue for the lower ranked disciples, but it caused many high ranking members to be very dissatisfied. They believed Han Li viewed himself too highly, not knowing how high the sky was or how deep the earth was. Not even Doctor Mo was this haughty, so how could Han Li, a trifling disciple who just finished his apprenticeship, dare to act so presumptuously?

But after Han Li saved someone who suffered a heavy and life-threatening wound from the brink of death and aided in his recovery, all signs of complaint disappeared without a trace, and no one brought up the eccentric rule again.

No one wanted to offend someone who may save their lives countless times like the medicinal god over a small and trivial matter. They naturally believed that forcing visitors to ring a bell to meet him was a strange habit unique to temperamental medicinal gods.

The following days passed one by one, and even the Sect Elders gradually followed Han Li's rule; when they wanted to ask for medical help, they would send someone to respectfully sound the big clock to call for Han Li.

God Hand Valley's eccentric rule gradually turned Han Li into a legend of sorts in the Seven Mysteries Sects.

What was ridiculous was that he was not even ranked in the sect! He didn't have a high ranking position, nor did he hold any position of power.

He was still a low ranking disciple! But then again, who has seen such a popular disciple in the sect? Even the Sect Elders who came to visit him would address him as Doctor Han. Not many people dared to directly address Han Li by his name.

Of course, this did not apply to Li Feiyu, also known to Han Li as Senior Disciple Li.

Li Feiyu still maintained his cold and detached disposition in front of others, but every time he saw Han Li, he became sloppy and carefree. His treatment of Han Li had not been changed by his new identity as a medicinal god, unlike Fatty Wang and the other disciples who had drifted apart and became more respectful. There were no traces of politeness whenever Li Feiyu addressed Han Li by his name.

This made Han Li feel a bit of gratitude. He still wasn't accustomed to living a life of solitude.

Just thinking about Li Feiyu's expression whenever he laughed, Han Li couldn't help but think of another individual's face..

Recently, he unexpectedly met someone else who had ridden the same carriage as Han Li up the mountains several years ago. Now an inner sect member of the Seven Supreme Division, Wu Yan had contracted a strange illness that was untreatable by all of the doctors who were sent to treat him, tormenting him to no ends. In the end, he had no choice but to use Sect Leader Ma's name to ask for Han Li's help to cure his illness.

Wu Yan's memory was quite good, and when he met the famous Doctor Han, he recognized with a single glance that he was one of the children who came on the same carriage as him--Han Li. His face revealed a shocked look that was still fresh fresh in Han Li's memory to this day. That year, Wu Yan's attitude towards Han Li was not exceptionally good, even a bit vile.

Seeing Wu Yan's awkward appearance, Han Li truly felt like laughing. Normally, he would not treat Wu Yan's illness because of their shared history, but in order to not damage his reputation as a medicinal god, he even increased the amount of prescribed medicine so that Wu Yan

would recover from his illness in two short days.

During the period of recovery, however, the large amount of prescribed medicine made Wu Yan suffer even more pain. This was Han Li's way of lightly reprimanding the previously vile-tempered youth.

Han Li was not as magnanimous as he appeared to be. He wouldn't forget a single grudge.

Just like this, Han Li slowly replaced Doctor Mo's position on the mountain and was even considered to be one tier above Doctor Mo.

In God Hand Valley, Han Li would take out the small bottle, put it inside an empty space within the valley, and allowed the mysterious green liquid to form every seven to eight days. With the mysterious green liquid, he would hasten the growth of rare and ancient herbs, which he would refine into medicine with the utmost care.

Only a small portion of these herbs were used on those who visited him to seek medical aid; the majority of the herbs were taken and used for Han Li's personal use. He would use them to cultivate and refine Yuan Qi and to push forward in his cultivation of the Eternal Spring Arts.

Han Li gently shifted the body within the late Doctor Mo's chair to find a more comfortable position.

Although the chair he sat on was indeed Doctor Mo's armchair, this place was not Doctor Mo's house but rather Han Li's residence. He had taken all the items he thought would be useful from Doctor Mo's house and, with no trace of politeness, claimed them as his own, moving them into his own residence. As for the position in which Han Li was sitting, even if someone saw his disrespectful actions, they would not do anything because in their eyes, the current Han Li's worth far exceeded that of Doctor Mo's. People were surprisingly very realistic and practical!

Doctor Mo's residence was far bigger than Han Li's, so moving into the bigger house would have been more suitable.

Unfortunately, Han Li thought that living there was a bit weird. After all, he was the main cause of Doctor Mo's death. Brazenly living in the

house of someone he killed with his own hand would cause his heart to become heavy and cold. As a result, living in his own residence (tl: he calls it his “own doghouse”) was far more reassuring and comfortable to Han Li.

However, whenever he thought of Doctor Mo, Han Li would naturally be unable to forget the sad fact that he was still under the control of a dead person.

In the period of time after Doctor Mo’s death, he carefully examined his own body, both internally and externally, countless times. He was still unable to refine that thread of cold Yin Qi hidden within his Dantian, Han Li tried to use Pure Spirit Powder and other famous poison-dispelling methods, but sadly none of them were effective. It seemed like the long journey he would have to take in one year’s time was unavoidable.

Chapter 67: Fireball Technique

Han Li, who had been sitting still for half a day, suddenly raised his left hand and straightened one of his fingers, making him appear unfathomably mysterious.

But not long after, the space half an inch away from his erect fingertip suddenly fluctuated, and several small sparks of fire appeared. When the sparks first appeared, they immediately made a “ZiLa” sound as they twisted and turned in the air to form a walnut-sized ball of red flames. Although this fireball was not big, a blistering heat emanated from this small ball of fire, permeating the entire room.

As Han Li reclined, his face was still covered by his book. He appeared to be asleep, if not for the fact that the small fireball at the tip of his finger continued to release “ZiLa! Zila!” sounds of high temperature combustions. This, coupled with his unmoving fingertip, made Han Li appear particularly eye catching.

As minutes inched by, the fireball continued to maintain the same vigorous energy, not revealing any hint of being extinguished. However, Han Li eventually shifted. The finger he used to support the fireball started to tremble slightly. The trembling from his finger grew to affect his wrist, then his entire arm. Soon, even his whole body started to tremble.

Abruptly, Han Li sat up on the armchair, not even aware that the book had fallen away from his face and onto the ground.

His two eyes stared unwaveringly at the fireball on his fingertips, his face red from holding his breath. From his forehead to his neck, his exposed skin revealed many small beads of sweat, appearing as if he had just finished performing some intense exercise that made his body overheat.

After a short while, the fireball started to sway alongside Han Li's intense rocking. The floating flame would be large in one moment, then small in the next, unable to maintain a constant state. Not long after, it

became small once again. The flame shrank into a spark and dissipated into thin air.

Once the fireball disappeared, Han Li felt like a man who had his backbone removed. His fireball had greatly consumed his energy. Extremely drained, he reclined his body once more on the chair.

“This Fireball Technique is vexing to train in! Even though I’ve researched this technique for half a year, I’m still unable to have complete control over it! The most I can manage is extend its duration by a little bit.” Talking to himself, Han Li stared at the ceiling.

It turned out that the last few pages of the Eternal Spring Arts Book contained several spells. At first glance, it was evident that these were beginner level techniques for cultivators who just entered the sect. Since all he knew was the Eternal Spring Arts Incantation, this made Han Li feel like he obtained a treasure, and for several consecutive nights, he was unable to sleep due to his excitement.

Since he had witnessed firsthand Doctor Mo using some of the spells, it was no surprise that he would be this excited. Han Li had found Doctor Mo’s strength terrifying, so he viewed the formidable collection of techniques with great interest.

Unfortunately for Han Li, who was currently at the peak of the sixth stage of the Eternal Spring Arts Incantation, he was like a beggar holding a golden bowl and asking for alms. Since he was never taught any basic spells, he was unable to perform even the simplest technique. But now he suddenly came upon several technique incantations. How could he not be pleased?

The final pages of the book had five spells and their respective incantations. They were “Fireball”, “Soul-lock Seal”, “Imperial Flight”, “Telekinesis”, and “Heaven’s Eye.” To Han Li, all of the techniques and their incantations were still very ancient, profound, and hard to comprehend.

This was no surprise since the incantations were composed of words and phrases from an ancient language. Even though he had read quite a

few books, he had a very superficial understanding of the ancient texts, so he was unable to immediately grasp certain meanings.

Helpless and without a choice, Han Li finally began studying the Eternal Spring Arts as if his life depending on it, driving straight into piles of different books that were related to old, classical languages. He bitterly studied the incantations' meanings every day and night, racking his brain several tens of times over every phrase and every word. Refusing to quit, Han Li was resolved to completely comprehend all of the techniques listed in the book.

Even though he had never gone to a school or academy to obtain a formal education, he understood that making a mistake while cultivating boundlessly powerful energy would be more difficult to deal with than an infuriating obsession and might very well take this small life of his. Thinking of his own personal well-being, Han Li was filled with trepidation and fear, not daring to be even a slight bit careless.

After three months of intensive research, Han Li finally was able to gain a level of mastery over the theory behind the incantations and apply them. As a result, he was finally starting to truly practice these techniques.

However, Han Li's insane method of studying delivered a large mental blow to his enthusiasm and stamina.

He had originally planned to rely upon his intelligence, which was enhanced by the Eternal Spring Arts, and thought that learning spells shouldn't be difficult, but who knew that he would suddenly oddly become baffled. He obviously knew the theory theory behind the techniques, but when it came time to applying them into practice, he could never manage to succeed; no matter what he did, he could not do it right. He did not know whether it was because the spells were wrong, he read the incantations incorrectly, or his magic power was not in the right place. Unable to discover the reason why, Han Li felt extremely slow-witted.

Han Li did not know what was causing his failures, but if it was a

deficiency in magic power, he would eat another two spiritual herbs and the problem would be solved.

However, this was a problem that he was unable to wrap his head around. Han Li came to the conclusion that his innate talent for performing Celestial Arts was not as great as he thought it was.

It was only after a long period of bitter training that he finally gained a bit of success in the Fireball Technique and the Heaven's Eyes Technique. As for the other three Celestial Arts, he did not succeed; he was unable to even reach their initial stages.

With great dismay, he could only concentrate on the Fireball Technique and Heaven's Eye Technique. He placed quite a bit of hope into these two Celestial Arts since they were the only ones he could comprehend.

Among these, the Fireball Technique's power did not disappoint Han Li; in fact, it greatly surpassed Han Li's expectations.

Despite of the Fireball Technique's small size, it contained a terrifyingly high temperature that could not be underestimated. There was nothing that the Fireball Technique couldn't burn.

Even if the fireball touched a blade made of tempered steel, the area the fireball touched would immediately be melted into liquid steel upon contact.

Faced with this inhumanly frightening power, Han Li even threw the fireball into a puddle of water to test it. Upon contact, the reaction of the puddle of water was similar to that of oil, and immediately lit up instead of extinguishing the fireball.

After thoroughly understanding the Fireball Technique's immense power, Han Li finally realized why Yu Zhitong looked down upon mortals with a lofty attitude.

Now that Han Li thought about it, a mediocre cultivator who knew a Celestial Art similar to the Fireball Technique could easily kill experts in Jiang Hu. If it was a slightly stronger cultivator, then he could easily sweep across Jiang Hu, unrivaled under the heavens.

The difference in power was simply too immense. It was no wonder that Yu Zhitong looked at normal mortals as if they were insects he could crush underfoot.

Chapter 68: Poisoned

As for the other spells, Han Li held high expectations for the Heaven's Eye Technique after witnessing the terrifying power that the seemingly simple Fireball Technique contained.

After executing the technique, however, Han Li understood that this spell was simply a small transfer of energy into one's eyes. There was hardly any difficulty worth mentioning, making it appear as if it were easy to master.

However, the Heaven's Eye Technique seemed easy to master because its difficulty was directly proportional to the strength of its target. It grew increasingly more difficult to master it as the target's strength increased. Its functions focused primarily on checking the strength and purity of the magic power belonging to cultivators, making it a useful support-type spell.

At first, Han Li was exhilarated and used the Heaven's Eye Technique on both of his eyes. He then used his eyes, now filled with magic power, to inspect his own body's condition. Through his enhanced perception, he saw a dim layer of white light permeating his body. The closer he got to his Dantian, the more dense the white light became.

The white light was his magic power. When Han Li saw this, he couldn't help but extend a hand to touch the white light. However, he felt nothing at all. He noticed that magic power was similar to air; both were incorporeal and without form, and only through the use of the Heaven's Eye Technique could he hope to inspect it.

But after several consecutive inspections, Han Li completely lost all interest in the Heaven's Eye Technique.

His loss of interest was due to the fact that he was all alone in the entire Seven Mysteries Sect. Who could he use the Heaven's Eye Technique on? He couldn't possibly spend the whole day narcissistically examining himself!

Therefore, aside from intensifying his training of the Fireball

Technique, which he hoped to be able to familiarize himself with in order to use it during actual combat, Han Li turned his attention to other types of spells that he had yet to learn. He began practicing other spells slowly and in a repetitive manner, hoping for more breakthroughs.

Slightly regaining a portion of his body's energy, Han Li could only sigh after thinking about the difficulty of training in other spells. The frequency of his complaints, however, decreased significantly over time as he continued practicing the spells.

“Dong— Dong—”

The clock near the valley entrance was sounded; its chime spreading into the valley.

Han Li wrinkled his eyebrows. He didn't know why, but recently, the amount of people who came for help had suddenly increased. Furthermore, a majority of them had broken hands, broken arms, knife wounds, projectile wounds, and other similar external injuries.

He did not dare to neglect his patients because aiding a person is like aiding in putting out a fire*. He collected himself and grabbed his medical bag. After exiting his house, Han Li made a beeline for the valley entrance.

(TL: *idiom: both saving a person and putting out a fire need to be done immediately and with the utmost care)

Outside the valley forest entrance early in the morning, Han Li saw a high ranking disciple wearing embroidered clothing. The disciple anxiously paced to and fro near the big clock like an ant on a hot pan.

Upon seeing Han Li, he immediately hurried towards him.

“Doctor Han, please follow me. My master has been poisoned and is on the verge of death. I respectfully ask if you would take a look to see if you can remove the poison from his body.”

As this person approached, Han Li realized that the disciple had a familiar face. Having seen him a few times, he realized that the man was Elder Li's most favored disciple, Ma Rong, who had previously come to

visit Han Li several times on behalf of his master, Elder Li. Therefore, Ma Rong could almost be considered an acquaintance.

“Poisoned?” Han Li asked while immediately walking down the road. As they hurried along, Han Li asking darkly about the details behind Elder Li’s misfortune. Han Li was aware that there were some poison that even he himself had no experience with.

“Yes, my master got into a fight with a member of the Feral Wolf Gang while travelling down the mountains to take care of some business. In the end, he was not careful and suffered an attack from a dark green seed looking item. At first, my master was not overly worried and even retaliated by killing his opponent. Who knew that the poison would suddenly take effect on the way back up the mountain, causing him to fall unconscious?”

“Have you tried to seek the aid of other doctors?”

“Of course we did. If it was any ordinary poison, then I would not have come to trouble Doctor Han. Those quack doctors, other than knowing that my master suffered from a rare poison, knew nothing else; they did not even dare to prescribe a medicine.”

Ma Rong spoke with an extremely dissatisfied face.

As Han Li listened, his facial expression did not change. As he hurriedly followed Ma Rong down the path, the only noise he made was “En.” Soon, however, doubt arose in his heart.

Truthfully, he was not extremely well versed in curing poisons. If it was an internal or external injury, he could depend on several types of medicinal herbs. If he had to treat some rare deadly poison, however, he was not sure that he would be able to provide a solution to the problem.

Even though he had the Pure Spirit Powder, an antidote that could cure hundreds of poisons, the world contained an innumerable amount of poisons. Who knew whether the Pure Spirit Power could cure the specific poison that was harming Elder Li? The few local doctors were not completely useless in the healing and dispelling poisons; otherwise, they would have been kicked off the mountain by the Elders of the Seven

Mysteries Sect. After all, the sect could not afford to raise a group of incompetent medical disciples who were unable to heal even the smallest of injuries.

However, they did not dare to even prescribe a simple prescription, showing that this poison was a troublesome problem that they have never encountered before. Han Li could only survive by having many hidden cards and being able to adapt himself to any situation. Even if he was unable to save Elder Li, it wasn't likely that it would lower his own reputation. After all, there was no medicinal god that could cure every sickness.

As Han Li was carefully refining his plan, Ma Rong practically forced Han Li to run lightly while grasping the sleeves of his garment. In this manner, the two hurried towards Elder Li's residence.

Seeing him so energetic, Han Li knew that their master-to-disciple relationship was pretty deep.

Han Li felt slightly sorrowful because he thought back to his relationship with Doctor Mo. Although they were master and disciples in name, their actual relationship was similar to two enemies. If only their relationship had been as harmonious as the one between Ma Rong and his master.

In the depths of his heart, Han Li had always held a form of respect towards Doctor Mo. After all, his medicinal knowledge and Eternal Spring Arts had been imparted to him by the deceased doctor.

But sadly, things were not meant to be. The heavens dictated that the two would be unable to live in the same world, forcing them fight an intensive battle in which Doctor Mo died accidentally by Han Li's own hands.

Thinking about his past memories, Han Li couldn't help but sigh. Afterwards, Ma Rong brought him to Elder Li's place.

Chapter 69: Li Feiyu and the Young Lady

Elder Li's residence was not extravagant; instead, it was merely a small, humble house.

Surrounding several houses in close proximity was a two meter high, half a meter thick dirt wall encircling a simple courtyard. Facing the path was an arched, half-moon gateway through which Han Li could see that the courtyard was filled with many visitors.

Stepping into the courtyard, Han Li realized that the actual number of people was much higher than what he saw from outside the gate. They gathered in groups of twos or threes, discussing Elder Li's state in low voices.

Han Li had already heard that Elder Li was a good-natured person in the Seven Mysteries Sect. Regardless if one was a lower-ranked disciple or an esteemed colleague, he rarely got angry with anyone, nor did he scramble for power and profit in the sect. As a result, many figures in the sect, both the important and the insignificant, had nothing but compliments for the old man, causing his popularity to be very high.

Not that Elder Li was suffering from an poison-induced illness, everyone with high status in the sect would eventually pay their respects either personally or through a representative. Not a single person failed to do so regardless if their reason for coming was heartfelt or hypocritic. As a result, the courtyard soon became filled by a throng of people.

Once Han Li came in, he was recognized by the people in the courtyard. The lowest Protectors immediately surrounded him, each striving to be the first to greet him

"How are you, Medicinal God Han?!"

"Doctor Han came!"

A wave of well-wishing rang out and continuously battered his ears. Even if he didn't want to hear the endless noise, he had no choice but to endure.

Seeing these faces brimming with enthusiasm, Han Li similarly showed a bright smile that did not lose to the crowd in terms of splendor. However, although he appeared to be extremely courteous, he was actually sick of false pleasantries.

Fortunately, those with high status, such as the Vice Sect Leaders and Consecrated Elders, implicitly nodded their heads in Han Li's direction, showing their acknowledgement of his arrival without making a move to approach him.

Seeing that they did not make it uncomfortable for Han Li by making him greet them, Han Li had a good impression about these esteemed individuals.

Because of Ma Rong's low status, he was unable to anything besides stand to the side with a look of concern. As the Protectors tried to get closer to Han Li with their constant stream of pleasantries, Ma Rong's face revealed worry while both of his hands rubbed against each other nonstop.

Finally, after Han Li finished greeting the last person, Ma Rong couldn't wait any longer and immediately rushed forward, grabbing Han Li's arm with one hand and charging straight into the house. This rude and impetuous action angered a few people who wished to get on good terms with Medicinal God Han, revealing a bit of their displeasure.

On the outside Han Li had a forced smile, but he was actually quite pleased with Ma Rong's decision. This way, he could finally get rid of those incessantly annoying people without having to offend anyone.

With a sense of urgency, Han Li was pulled into living room by Ma Rong.

There were not very many people inside, except a few family members and two Elders. Sect Leader Ma was also there, but what surprised Han Li the most was that Li Feiyu was also inside the room.

Han Li was shocked. According to what he knew, there was no relationship between Li Feiyu and Elder Li, so why did he showed here?

Just as his stomach was about to burst with questions, Han Li noticed that Senior Disciple Li was comforting a petite girl with tears flowing down her face. Li Feiyu's highly focused expression was laced with traces of emotion, a look that was very different from the one he usually showed to his fellow disciples.

Looking at Li Feiyu's enamoured appearance, Han Li suddenly realized what was going on. Startled, he couldn't help but think that it was extremely funny.

Han Li promptly and carefully scrutinized the young lady's appearance, wanting to see just what kind of beauty could make Li Feiyu disregard everything for the sake of love.

The young lady looked to be around fifteen to sixteen years of age and was wearing a jasper hairpin. In addition, she wore a lotus green dress, giving the originally sweet and pleasant facial features a naughty and mischievous air. Despite of this, her two eyes were swollen red, making her seem lovely yet pathetic. Her dejected appearance gave people an urge to lovingly bring her into a hugging embrace.

"Zeze! She really is one fair young lady." Han Li exclaimed for several moments in his heart, thinking that Li Feiyu falling under this lady's love snare was pardonable. In his heart, there was still a trace of envy and jealousy, not knowing when he himself would also be able to have an intimate companion.

Maybe it was because he realized that Han Li was studying this young lady, but Ma Rong was quick to introduce everyone within the house to Han Li in order for him to establish a sense of familiarity.

Sect Leader Ma and a white faced Elder Qian whom Han Li had saw before naturally did not need any introductions, and he immediately took the initiative to step forward to check the body.

"Greetings Sect Leader Ma, Elder Qian!"

"Hehe! The young Doctor Han has arrived!" Sect Leader Ma acted as if he were Han Li's close friend, almost as if there was no difference between their status.

“Doctor Han is Doctor Han, why do you have to mention the word ‘young’?” Han Li silently curse within his heart in disagreement with Sect Leader Ma’s phrase.

On the other hand, Elder Qian’s attitude was cold and detached. He merely nodded his head, acting in complete opposite to Sect Leader Ma. Han Li was not offended by Elder Qian’s indifference, since he knew that Elder Qian practiced a special cultivation method that required him to sever his feelings and desires, causing him to treat everyone with the same cold and indifferent attitude.

In addition to Sect Leader Ma and Elder Qian, there was another tall, sturdy, and red-faced Elder with whom Han Li wasn’t familiar with. This Elder’s palms were rough and coarse, and all ten of his short fingers were thick and solid; from this, it was evident from a single glance that this Elder trained in a special martial art.

“This is Elder Zhao, my master’s close friend. His previously job was to supervise the Treasure Gathering Division outside the mountain. He just came back two days ago.” Ma Rong said while introducing the Elder to Han Li.

Towards Han Li, Elder Zhao was neither cold nor warm. He made an “en” sound with his nose, not saying a word, but the doubt in his eyes was evident. He clearly didn’t trust the invited Medicinal God Han’s skills due to his young age.

Since Elder Zhao didn’t seem to have a favorable attitude towards him, Han Li would naturally not take the initiative to fawn over Elder Zhao. Following Elder Zhao’s example, Han Li used a flat tone to give his respects, then tried his best to avoid the other person.

(TL: The original raw Chinese was “attach himself onto the other person’s hot buttock”

(A message from the author of “A Record of a Mortal’s Journey to Immortality”)

Tomorrow I will bring myself together and amend all the unreasonable areas the readers have brought to my attention, so I can only release one

chapter today. I hope that the readers will forgive me! I will strive to make this book even more amazing than it currently is. Thank you all for your patience!

Chapter 70: Instigation

It was obvious that Sect Leader Ma sensed the pair's animosity. Not only was he not worried, his face revealed a hint of a cheerful look.

"Even though young Doctor Han is of a young age, his medicinal skills can be said to have reached perfection. I believe that under Doctor Han's care, Elder Li can rise from the brink of death," he suddenly said, praising Han Li's medicinal abilities.

"Really? With him being so young, is his medicinal expertise that exceptional? Well, I don't really believe you. Don't tell me that his medicinal knowledge is even better than Doctor Mo's medicinal knowledge!"

After hearing these words, a few family members became at a loss, unsure of what to do.

They didn't want to place Elder Li's fate in Han Li's hands, nor did they even hope that this little medicinal god could cure the poison and save his life!

To open their mouths to refute Elder Zhao's words also did not seem appropriate; the party in question was Elder Li's friend and also an Elder in the Seven Mysteries Sect.

"Hehe! Elder Zhao is not aware that little Doctor Han is Doctor Mo's proud disciple, and his medicinal expertise already far surpasses that of Doctor Mo." Vice Sect Leader secretly smirked, adding firewood to the fire.

"Even if this little boy of about years of age started learning when he was still in his mother's womb, how exceptional can his medicinal expertise be? I still won't believe you unless I personally see it with my own eyes," said Elder Zhao, shaking his head like a palm-leaf fan. He was still unwilling to directly criticize Han Li and thus fall under Vice Sect Leader's trap by offending someone whom he shouldn't have offended. Elder Zhao might have seemed like a rude and impetuous individual, but regardless of his attitude, he was not a fool who would rashly insult

another member of the sect without confirming the identity of the person he was judging. After all, he had been able to hold the high status of an Elder and maintain this position.

“On the other side, Han Li rolled his eyes, thinking to himself, “Why do I need to prove to you whether my medicinal skills are good enough?” He knew that Sect Leader Ma intentionally drew out this response, but Han Li still felt a bit depressed.

It was very apparent that this Elder Zhao and Sect Leader Ma were not of the same faction and even had a bit of a hostile relationship.

“The Mixed Circular Palm that Elder Zhao practices in has been trained to perfection. Its might is boundless!” Sect Leader Ma said. Seeing Han Li look displeased with Elder Zhao, Sect Leader Ma felt the joy within his heart become even stronger, making him uncontrollably cry out random and strange phrases.

“Heng! How can it compare to Sect Leader Ma’s highly polished Mysterious Yin Finger?” It seemed that Elder Zhao did not care for the other’s identity as a Vice Sect Master. Deadpanned and with no traces of politeness, Vice Sect Master Ma retaliated with a phrase of his own.

“Haha! Elder Zhao has wrongly praised me.”

It was evident that Sect Leader Ma a type of person who hid knives within their smiles. He did not really mind Elder Zhao’s sarcastic tone, smiling as he calmly received the other’s false compliment.

This was not the first time Elder Zhao had faced this type of situation, nor could he do anything about it. He could only shut his mouth, unwilling to nag with his thick-skinned opponent. He inwardly felt that there was something he couldn’t wrap his mind around concerning the other’s words.

Even though Sect Leader Ma was not in the same faction as Elder Zhao, this was the first time they had revealed the conflicts of the upper echelons in front of so many juniors. It was unknown whether there were any tricks involved.

As he listened to the two opposing parties exchanging harsh words, Han Li's expression did not change in the least as he pretended to be ignorant and unknowing of everything. But within his heart, he knew that Sect Leader Ma was once again trying to instigate a rift in the relationship between Han Li and Elder Zhao.

Sect Leader Ma had been indirectly attacking his opponents with words ever since he met Han Li, trying to rope this highly skilled medicinal god into his faction, thus expanding his influence.

However, Han Li had never even considered joining the Seven Mysteries Sect's internal struggle for power.

It was not because he was intentionally aloof from political and material pursuits or that he was arrogant, but because ever since he came into contact with Doctor Mo, Yu Zhitong and similar people of high status, his aspirations were a lot higher, especially since he learned two different types of spells. He already viewed the Seven Mysteries Sect's internal struggle with minimal importance.

Although Han Li's strength was not weak, he did not want to offend those of a higher status. It was for this reason that he chose to avoid giving a clear reply, neither accepting nor accepting the invitations from the upper echelon.

Just like that, it was Sect Leader Ma's turn to have endless headaches.

Even though Han Li's profound medicinal skills made it so that he could act stubbornly, Han Li was dragging out his response for too long of a period, making Sect Leader Ma extremely frustrated. To this day, Han Li had still refused to join his faction, nor had he given a direct answer.

But in order to prevent Han Li from entering other factions, Sect Leader Ma had to do his best to ruin the relationship between Han Li and the other upper echelon members, inciting disharmony. Whether these childish tactics were effective or not, Han Li did not know, but up until today it was the first time that an upper level faction had annoyed him greatly.

Right now, Sect Leader Ma was doing his best to undermine Han Li's

opinion of Elder Zhao, presumably wanting him to have no good memories of this Elder.

Ma Rong, noticing the start of a cockfight, felt a bit of panic within his heart and hurriedly continued his introductions.

“This is my master’s wife, Li Shi.” He began by pointing at a middle aged woman who had some resemblance to the young lady.

“This is.....”

“This is.....”

The young lady by Li Feiyu’s side was introduced last. Her name was Zhang Xiuer. Unexpectedly, she was Elder Li’s niece.

When he introduced Li Feiyu, the other intentionally pretended to not recognize Han Li, revealing a cool, unapproachable appearance. This made Ma Rong, who had initiated the introductions himself, feel awkward; he hurriedly whispered an explanation to Han Li, saying:

“Protector Li has always been like this. This is his normal temperament and is not specifically directed at you, Doctor Han, so please do not take this personally.”

(TL: Li Feiyu was promoted to Protector, but he’s still considered a disciple, so he’ll be referred to as Senior Disciple Li once in awhile)

Han Li smiled slightly, knowing that Li Feiyu did not want to reveal their relationship in front of so many people.

“His demeanor means nothing to me. I would not lower myself by begging for attention from other people. Right now, it is better to look at Elder Li’s condition than to waste time by arguing! Saving lives is more important.” Han Li intentionally made a dismissive comment toward Li Feiyu.

Ma Rong, upon hearing this, put his heart at ease and invited everybody into the bedroom of the sick patient.

After hearing Han Li’s statement, Li Feiyu’s lips twitched a bit, appearing nonchalant. When everyone turned their bodies, he suddenly

made a funny face towards Han Li's direction then quickly returned to his normal appearance, making it seem as if nothing had happened.

Han Li strongly resisted his urge to smile. Soon after, he closely followed Senior Disciple Li's footsteps, coming up to the front of Elder Li's bed.

Upon seeing the facial features of the person on the bed, the normally bold Han Li couldn't help but suck in a cold breath. Now he finally understood why the other doctors were not willing to prescribe medicine.

Right now, the originally benign-faced Senior Elder Li remained unconscious, but there were spots of poison, the size of copper coins, extending from his face to his neck region and from his hands to his legs. Each spot of poison appeared to be different from the others because they varied in a plethora of abnormally bright colors. Everyone who saw them became visibly apprehensive. What was even more problematic for Han Li was that Elder Li's lips were greenish black and his facial features were enshrouded in a layer of dark air. This meant that the poison was in its late stages, thus making the complex task of saving Elder Li's small life more difficult.

Chapter 71: Pure Spirit Powder

Han Li locked his eyebrows and remained quiet.

He had just finished taking Elder Li's pulse and examining his tongue and pupils. He made a cursory decision that this poison was a blend of different poisons, the same as the Aromatic Coiling Silk he had used before. Han Li didn't have the ability to remove the poison by targeting one type of poison at a time. He could only try to use the Pure Spirit Powder and other unorthodox methods.

Thinking about this, Han Li secretly cursed the other doctors who didn't have the courage to remove the poison and pretended to look like they were investigating, thus leaving him with this difficult problem.

After a moment, Elder Zhao could not hold back anymore and asked:

"You small child! Can you save Elder Li or not? Say something!"

"Elder Zhao, you are too impatient. Can't you see that Doctor Han is trying to think of a solution? Be more patient!" Before Han Li answered, Sect Leader Ma, who was standing nearby, once again pretended to be Han Li's ally and taunted Elder Zhao.

Elder Zhao stared and opened his mouth as if to say something, but Han Li didn't wait for him to start talking. He gave a slight cough, halting further conversation.

Han Li's cough raised a surprised look from the people inside the house. At this moment, Han Li remembered that he was only slightly over ten years old, but he, albeit somewhat comically, coughed like a old man. The irony of the situation, however, didn't matter. He had completed his goal and didn't want to listen to the pair's argument anymore.

"This is a blend of different poison, which makes it very troublesome to remove. I can't promise that I can completely remove this poison, but I can try. The process of removing the poison is risky, and it may even hasten Elder Li's death. Do you still want me to proceed?" Han Li pretended to be awkward and finished his statement.

For him, it was better to not take the effort to remove the poison seeing that his chances of succeeding were not very favorable.

Han Li's words made the family members look at each other. No one dared to agree and let him immediately start removing the poison, but they knew that other than Han Li, no other doctor would be capable of curing Elder Li.

After a while, Elder Li's wife, Lady Li, suddenly asked:

"Doctor Han, what is your rate of success for saving my husband?"

"Fifty percent," Han Li said without hesitating.

"Very well. Doctor Han, please do your best to save him. If anything happens to my husband, it will be because of the will of Heaven. I will never resent you, Doctor Han." Lady Li showed no hesitation, making up her mind so decisively in a manner that Han Li didn't expect.

"Sister, you're not going to reconsider? I think it's incredibly risky considering that this doctor is very young!" Elder Zhao grew slightly anxious and wanted to dissuade Lady Li from being overly impulsive.

"I've considered it thoroughly. If Doctor Han doesn't remove the poison, my husband will not live past tonight. Why not take the risk and try even if there's only a fifty percent chance of success?" Lady Li put her head down and said softly.

"This....." Elder Zhao could not reply with even a single word.

Han Li briefly glanced at the other individuals and seeing how they did not oppose Lady Li's decision, he removed a green porcelain bottle from his medicinal bag. From within the bottle, he took out a red medicinal pill.

"Someone bring a bowl of warm water, dissolve this pill within the water, and have Elder Li drink it."

"I'll go." A clear and melodious voice rang out before Han Li finished speaking.

Right after answering, the red-eyed Zhang Xiuer, who had been

previously standing to the side, started walking out.

Li Feiyu stared distractedly before following her out. This caused Han Li to not help but feel unbridled disdain towards Li Feiyu.

A moment later, Zhang Xiuer walked in with a helpless face, both hands empty. Li Feiyu followed closely behind, carefully holding a small white porcelain bowl.

The crowd within the room, upon watching this scene, couldn't help but feel a bit of a smile within their hearts. Their faces revealed the happiness of watching a good show, making Zhang Xiuer's face blush and give forth a rosy red halo. Her hands rubbed against each other, revealing the appearance of a helpless and humble daughter.

Zhang Xiuer's reactions lowered the nervous atmosphere in the room, easing the tension within their hearts.

Li Feiyu straightforwardly gave the bowl to Lady Li.

"Doctor Han, please verify whether this bowl of water will suffice." Lady Li turned her head to ask for Han Li's opinion.

"It will do."

Han Li swept his eyes over the white bowl. He then took the bowl with a single hand and threw the medicinal pill into the water. In a blink of an eye, the entire bowl of water was dyed with a red color.

"Have Elder Li drink this immediately. Women are more careful, so it will be better if you accept the task." Han Li stretched out his hand and the bowl towards Lady Li.

Lady Li hurriedly agreed, not daring to decline Han Li's request.

To her, every single one of Han Li's words affect her husband's life, so how could she not listen attentively?

"Just what is this medicine?" The wide eyed Elder Zhao asked with trepidation, voicing the question everyone in the room wanted to know as he looked at Lady Li pour the big bowl of medicinal water into Elder Li's mouth

“This is a type of antidote that I personally concocted. Hopefully, it will be effective against the poison within Elder Li’s body,” answered Han Li, downplaying his profound medicine.

He did not want other people to know of the Pure Spirit Powder’s existence. It would be better for him to keep a low profile so that this sacred antidote would not bring him a headache.

After the time it takes to eat a meal, the veil of dark air covering Elder Li’s face began to recede, gradually turning light. The spots of poison on his body turned from dark to light and started to shrink.

With these obvious changes, even an outsider would be able to tell that the poison in Elder Li’s body was progressively being eliminated, pushing Elder Li on the path of recovery.

After seeing this, the people within this room couldn’t help but feel their faces beam with happiness as they looked at Han Li in a whole new light. Only Elder Zhao was unable to completely wipe away his view towards Han Li, using his nose to make a soft “heng” noise, but his expression had softened quite a bit.

Seeing how he had not taken any other steps to alleviate the poison and yet it was already vanishing, even Han Li was startled.

The effectiveness of the Pure Spirit Powder completely exceeded his expectations. His next thought was that perhaps the poison afflicting Elder Li had not been as impressive as he thought it was.

Seeing these positive developments, Han Li had some concerns, and there were two reasons why.

The first reason was that he had just said that the process of counteracting the poison would contain some risks, but the poison ended up easily dispelled. The others might think that he had intentionally tricked them. Wouldn’t that be the same as slapping himself on the face?

Secondly, if the Pure Spirit Powder was so effective in dispelling poison, how come it couldn’t treat the poison within his own body? This made him feel even more anger and concern regarding the poison within his

body.

Chapter 72: Removing Poison

Han Li secretly cursed, but he silently maintained the smile on his face. In order to maintain his image as a medicinal god, he had to act as if he had planned everything in advance.

Han Li's calm appearance helped him deceive those who were present, letting them believe that the efficiency of the medicinal pill was within his expectations and making them feel more admiration towards him.

Sect Leader Ma smiled very cheerfully and lightheartedly, showing a sense of pride as if Han Li was already his subordinate. He was currently the one who was the most likely to gain Han Li's support, and as a result, he laughed as joyously and freely as he did.

But not long after, the situation took a drastic change.

"Not good!" Zhang Xiuer cried out in fear.

"The black air on Uncle's face is resurfacing."

These words caused everyone to become startled. A few of them gathered impulsively around Elder Li to take a closer look at him. Elder Zhao was among them.

Upon hearing Zhang Xiuer, Han Li felt his heart pause momentarily, but he did not immediately join the crowd. Instead, he stiffly moved closer to the front of the bed.

Lady Li was a meticulous lady with a sharp perception, and she hurriedly called out for two juniors to move away from the bed and make room for Medicinal God Han so that he could make a diagnosis.

Han Li, seeing that there was a space near the bedside, calmly walked up to carefully investigate the situation.

Approximately after the length of time for half a stick of incense to burn, Han Li was positive that the poison had not been completely removed, leaving behind a faint and indistinct black air on Elder Li's face.

Having reached the final verdict, Han Li slightly turned his head to

glance at Zhang Xiuer, thinking that this young lady had made a fuss over nothing.

Han Li's gaze contains a bit of disapproval that was discovered by Li Feiyu, who had been constantly staring at Zhang Xiuer. He returned Han Li's glance, unwilling to allow Han Li to offend the goddess of his heart.

Han Li was speechless. It seemed that once Li Feiyu fell to the snares of love, he would value his beloved over his friends.

Han Li returned his composure and continued to scrutinize Elder Li's condition, refusing to be nagged by a simpleton of a man who had been easily swayed by a woman.

Aside from the remaining black air on Elder Li's face, the spots of poison on his body, upon reaching the size of a soybean, maintained their size instead of continuing to grow even smaller. Due to the remaining poison in his body, Elder Li still remained unconscious.

Seeing the current situation, Han Li knew that he might finally be able to use his backup plan and not have to worry about the lies he told. It was just the right time to demonstrate his own foresight.

"Fetch a basin full of clear water," Han Li said with an unquestionable tone.

This time, the task did not fall upon Zhang Xiuer. Ma Rong rushed out before anyone could respond.

Han Li turned around and solemnly said to Elder Qian and Sect Leader Ma:

"Next, I will need two people to help me, using their inner strength to force the poison within Elder Li's body to move towards a few key acupoints. I will then use an acupuncture needle technique to release the blood and detoxify the poison, forcing the poison out of his body. Will you two will be able to handle it?"

Sect Leader Ma's eyes flickered with uncertainty, but he still agreed; Elder Qian, on the other hand, coldly nodded his head and agreed in a straightforward manner.

“Why do you have to specifically use those two people, am I not qualified to help?” Elder Zhao asked unhappily, believing that Han Li had underestimated him.

Han Li silently sighed, knowing that he had to clearly explain to this obstinate man.

“The Mixed Circular Hand that Elder Zhao practices should be based on external martial art techniques! Thus, regarding the purity of inner strength, I believe that Sect Leader Ma and Elder Qian are much more suitable.” Han Li said in a patient, warm tone.

“This.....”

Towards Han Li’s tactful reply, Elder Zhao was at a loss for words.

Han Li no longer felt any resentment towards this buffoon and spoke to the rest of the people in the room with a commanding tone:

“Aside from Sect Leader Ma and Elder Qian, everyone please step outside for now. The method to remove the poison from Elder Li is not suitable for people to watch. It requires absolute silence, so we must not be disturbed by others.”

Once Han Li finished speaking, his words made the people in the room feel foolish. Lady Li was the first to understand as she respectfully said a single phrase, “I leave my husband in your care.” She was the first to discreetly left the room.

With Lady Li as an example, the others, regardless of whether they were willing or not, could only return one by one back to the living room.

After Ma Rong brought back a basin of clear water, Han Li immediately hurried him out and tightly closed the door room, leaving a crowd of confused people looking at each other in dismay outside the room.

A quarter of an hour passed by, but the door had yet to open. Even though the only obstacle separating the crowd from the interior of the room was a door, not even a single sound was heard from within.

This peculiar silence caused the crowd of people, who was waiting for

news, to be irritable and restless. A trace of a shadow wordlessly crept into everyone's hearts; even Lady Li, who initially appeared to be calm, had some hints of restlessness, not to mention the fiery-tempered Elder Zhao, who had paced the living room back and forth countless of times.

Just when the people in the living room had completely lost all their patience, the room door opened with a "GaZhi" sound.

The crowd reflexively shifted their gaze for a moment, converging their eyes at the same place. The atmosphere immediately became heavy while containing a bit of anxiety.

Han Li calmly walked out. His weariness was evident on his face, but when he saw the crowd of people and their intense stares, he revealed a small smile.

"Everything's fine now. The remainder of the poison has been completely removed, and after a good night's rest, Elder Li will regain consciousness some time tomorrow."

Han Li said these words with great confidence. In reality he himself did not think that the removal of the poison would proceed so smoothly with not even the slightest complication.

After hearing these words, Lady Li and the others revealed a smile one by one, their originally depressing attitudes completely swept away. Several impulsive people wanted to barge in and take a look, but Han Li stretched out a hand and stopped them all.

"Elder Li's body is currently very weak and it is best that avoid too many people or loud noises to expedite the expulsion of the poison. Sect Leader Ma and Elder Qian have expended a great deal of inner strength, and are currently re-adjusting their breathing. I think that the less people enter, the better. The best case scenario would be if Lady Li were the only one who could enter," Han Li told Lady Li solemnly.

After hearing these news, Lady Li could not possibly have any other thought. She swiftly nodded her head and could not help but express her thanks to Han Li. She soon rushed into the room by herself in order to see her husband with her own eyes.

Chapter 73: Li Feiyu's Thoughts

Upon entering the house, Lady Li smelled a strong odor and saw Sect Leader Ma and Elder Qian sitting cross-legged in front of the bed with their eyes closed and in the process of harmonizing their breathing.

In the space between the two people, a basin of black blood emitted a horrid stench

According to Han Li, their faces were a bit pale due to the large amount of energy that they had expended for the sake of treating Elder Li.

Lady Li's heart was suddenly filled with gratitude towards the two men.

Although she did not know any martial arts, from what she had just seen and heard, she knew better than to bother the two people and quickly slowed down her steps, lightly approaching the front of the bed and looking towards the person lying in the bed sheets.

She only saw Elder Li sleeping soundly on the bed. The painful look between his brows had completely disappeared, although his face still looked greenish-yellow. The black Qi was gone, and the poison spots on the body also disappeared, leaving behind tiny scars that were nearly invisible to the human eye.

Seeing that the poison had almost been completely removed, Lady Li couldn't help but cry out in joy

A moment later, she wiped away the tears from the corner of her eyes. She remembered that she should go back and thank Han Li again, and thus she promptly gathered herself and quietly walked back to the living room. Once she stepped out of Elder Li's room, she was immediately surrounded by people who assaulted her with rounds of questions that never ended, so she did not have the chance to see Han Li.

She couldn't help but be surprised at the fact that Han Li was absent, so she hurriedly asked Ma Rong and the other people where he had gone.

After listening to their reply, Lady Li realized that Han Li had prescribed a rejuvenating drug before leaving nimbly excusing himself, not staying a

moment longer.

After hearing this, Lady Li was speechless for quite a while, but within her heart she had already made a firm decision. She decided that once Elder Li's body recovered, the couple, husband and wife, must personally pay a visit to Han Li and give a large sum of money in thanks for saving Elder Li's life.

Lady Li did not notice that within the room, aside from medicinal god Han Li, there was another person missing. Li Feiyu had left instead of staying around Zhang Xiuer like a constant shadow. On the side of some obscure small road, Han Li, who had recently left Elder Li's house, was laying on the grass with his hands under his head, relaxing under a lush and dense tree.

Just when he had finished counting to a thousand, a black shadow suddenly pounced on his body. He became very aggressive, as if he was deeply annoyed by the disturbance.

"Hey! Stop messing around! How come every time we meet, you always try to jump me? I'm not Zhang Xiuer!"

After Han Li finished speaking, the black shadow nimbly turned around in midair, landing on Han Li's side as light as a feather, his posture was elegant to the extreme. It was precisely Li Feiyu who had followed him.

"Han Li, wouldn't that dark and swarthy appearance of yours be completely shamed when compared to lady Zhang Xiuer?"

After hearing his words, Li Feiyu was irritated. and gently lifted his right toe to poke at Han Li's buttocks in a reprimanding manner.

Hearing his response, Han Li rolled his eyes and smoothly stood up.

"It seems that our Senior Disciple Li values his beloved over his friends. I trully am not prudent when it comes to making friends!"

"Stop speaking nonsense, what did you call me out for? You have to know that I finally found a rare opportunity to get close to Zhang Xiuer, but I'm wasting it by meeting with you! If you can't say something worthwhile, then don't think you'll be able to get away with it!" Li Feiyu

appeared to be distraught and deeply angered by Han Li because he was randomly called out.

“Did I call you out? How come even I did not know of it? Did I personally say it?” Han Li intentionally pretended to be shocked by exaggerating his surprise.

“When you came out of the room, you winked at me at me. Unless I was blind, how could I not understand that this was a hint for me to follow you? Stop beating around the bush. Is there something you need to tell me? I really need to get back.” Li Feiyu turned his body and left, preventing Han Li from being able to tell whether or not his attitude was a bluff.

Han Li did not plan to continue teasing his friend. His expression suddenly changed as he sternly told Li Feiyu:

“Don’t blame me for being meddlesome. As your friend, I want to confirm something. Does Zhang Xiuer know that you are taking the Essence Extraction Pill and that you only have a few years left to live?”

Upon hearing these words, Li Feiyu turned silent. His face became deadly pale, without a visible hint of blood.

Han Li sighed softly, knowing that he did not need to ask any further. The answer was evident in Li Feiyu’s expression alone.

“Why must you be a interfere with my affairs!” Li Feiyu’s expression was extremely sorrowful, finally speaking after a long, agonizing pause.

Han Li did not reply to Li Feiyu’s question; instead, he softly patted the other’s shoulder, trying to console him.

“You must have heard before that if you invest too much in this kind of relationship, your sorrows will only grow.” Han Li finally spoke what was on his mind after Li Feiyu had somewhat calmed down. He phrased this with a wise tone, making Li Feiyu pause for a moment.

“I am trying to pull you out of the trap before you fall too deep so that you will suffer less pain in the future,” Han Li warmly said, supplementing his words.

Li Feiyu looked at Han Li with a strange look in his eyes.

“What, do you have a problem?” Asked Han Li. He was disturbed by Li Feiyu’s gaze and hurriedly looked at him up and down.

“You little brat, how old are you that you can speak this way? Why do you speak as if you were an old, rosy hand when it comes to relationships? Don’t tell me that you have already experienced the love of a woman?” Li Feiyu suddenly opened his mouth to ask.

“Of course not, these words come from reading books. I think they are very reasonable, so I used them to explain things to you.”

“Oh! So it’s like that, I say! How can a presentable man with an unrestrained and natural appearance like know less about matters of the heart? Do I need your lengthy criticism? Our relationship exists only in my mind!” Li Feiyu released a lengthy sigh, continuously patting his own chest, as if he had received a big scare.

Han Li was speechless. Wasn’t this fool’s recovery way too quick? He was just talking about living and dying, and in the blink of an eye, he was once again laughing like an idiot, still an emotional person.

But Han Li was stubborn as a mule and asked, “Are you really giving up on Zhang Xiuer? You won’t take action when you see her in another’s embrace?”

Li Feiyu’s giddy appearance immediately turned extremely cold. Filled with killing intent, he declared, “I will chop off the hand of anyone who dares to touch Zhang Xiuer!”

“I don’t care about the things that happen after I die, but as long as I’m alive, Lady Zhang Xiuer belongs to me.” The tone of his words could turn anyone into solid ice.

Chapter 74: Imperial Flight Technique

Han Li looked at Li Feiyu's domineering face with respect and remained silent, not knowing what to say.

Suddenly, Li Feiyu's imposing air was abruptly retracted, returning him back to his jovial self. He suddenly winked his eye at Han Li and loudly said:

"What do you think? Wasn't my imposing air was realistic? Wasn't it overflowing with such an air of dominance, a formidable quality, that it made you admire me to the point of prostrating yourself in admiration, immediately resolving your heart to vow your loyalty and devotion to me?"

Hearing these arrogant words, Han Li couldn't help but laugh bitterly because he was actually moved by the Li Feiyu's resolute words. However, Li Feiyu's last words immediately reverted him to his true colors.

Han Li harshly stared at him for a short moment and gnashed his teeth together before saying, "Formidable character? I see you're more like a coward!"

Li Feiyu did not mind this harsh criticism; instead, he started laughing loudly in a very carefree manner, apparently very happy that he could manipulate Han Li in this way.

However, Han Li slowly recovered his composure, and while Li Feiyu was still laughing, he indifferently said:

"I have already reminded about your predicament, which you clearly understood. Now, I will solemnly ask you once again. Would you be willing to dispell your martial arts? If you do, I might still be able to prolong your life for a few more years, enabling you to live with Zhang Xiuer for a longer period of time. Will you truly not consider this option?"

Li Feiyu's laughter suddenly choked to a stop. His face deepened and his eyes fiercely pierced into Han Li, who closed his mouth.

But Han Li's expression remained the same and did not falter in returning his gaze.

After the time it takes to brew a cup of tea, Li Feiyu retracted the penetrative gaze from his eyes. His complexion returned to a much better state.

“Han Li, I have already told you that I will definitely not consider voluntarily discarding my martial arts. I know that you are looking out for me, but don’t mention this again, alright?” he said with a unyielding attitude. His words containing a beseeching tone.

“Moreover, do you think that Zhang Xiuer will be able to look up to me if I became a mediocre person without the strength to even win against a chicken?” Li Feiyu asked with a mocking tone.

Han Li was speechless. He turned his head to one side, and his eyes followed the small road that Li Feiyu had come from. After calmly looking around for a moment, he opened his mouth to say:

“Since you have already made your decision, then I will no longer try to persuade you otherwise. Hurry up, you should leave right now; hopefully, you and Lady Zhang Xiuer can become something happy couple.”

At Han Li’s words, Li Feiyu’s face was immediately covered in a smile. He strongly patted Han Li’s shoulder several times.

“Good, brother, these are the kinds of words that I love to hear. As of today, they are also the words that make me the happiest. I will be leaving first.”

With a few leaps, he disappeared down a small road, his silhouette vanishing without a trace.

“Oh, how it aches!” Han Li quickly grabbed at his shoulder. Li Feiyu’s multiple slaps had secretly contained Inner Strength, making his shoulder immediately swell until it looked like a small red bun. This time, his suffering was not small.

“This fool actually used Inner Strength to retaliate just because I poked at his sore spot,” Han Li thought, grimacing in pain while fishing out a medicinal paste. He took off his upper garment to spread the paste across his shoulder to heal his injury.

“Sigh! It is with great difficulty that I finally do a good deed, but this is how I end up. I really am not suited to doing good deeds! I should probably get back to comprehending my spells! The next time I see him, I’ll get my revenge for this incident,” Han Li thought with a hint of annoyance.

After a long stretch of time had passed, Han Li turned 18 years old.

In this period of time, the Seven Mysteries Sect and the Feral Wolf Gang had continued fighting until they finally declared war on each other.

Since then, several small skirmishes and big clashes had broken out at the border between the two powerhouses. All of the disciples, including Han Li, were affected by these battles, making Han Li feel endless sorrow and grief.

The large clock outside the valley rang out more frequently than usual as a result of the increased number of injuries, giving Han Li the opportunity to practice quite a few difficult medicinal techniques, causing him to have great progress in his medicinal expertise.

But even with Han Li’s magical hands that seemed able to bring the dead back to life, there were still quite a few high ranking sect members who had succumbed to their injuries. They either died in the battlefield or on the way back from the front lines, not even giving Han Li the slightest opportunity to save their lives.

It was also because of this that both sides revealed their young prodigies, who assumed the positions of their fallen comrades.

These talented youths included Wusha Sanying Erbao from the Feral Wolf Gang and Jie Shuangxiong from the Seven Mysteries Sect. Li Feiyu was also included among these talented youths because he had personally killed beheaded the Zi Yizhang, thus obtaining the revered position of Division Head of the External Blade Division. Li Feiyu could already be considered as a person of high authority. His relationship with Zhang Xiuer was also progressing rapidly, already to the point where marriage discussions were held.

Aware of the upcoming marriage, Han Li could only sigh. Who could

know whether what Li Feiyu was doing was right? After all, he was not Li Feiyu nor had Han Li walked in his shoes. Thus, Han Li was incapable of making a decision regarding Li Feiyu's course of actions

But thinking back, Han Li would not have had the courage to seek for his loved one's hand in marriage while knowing that his death was imminent.

As a result, Han Li could only pretend to be deaf and mute. He was aware that no matter how close he was to Li Feiyu, there were some lines he could not cross. Li Feiyu was his good friend, so of course Han Li had to be considerate of his choices.

Additionally, an extremely important matter recently occurred, forcing him to divert a large portion of his attention.

Through countless failures, Han Li finally learned how to use the "Imperial Flight Technique".

The Imperial Flight Technique was similar to Heaven's Eye Technique. Both of them were supplementary techniques and could only be performed on one's own body instead of on others'. However, its practical use was better than Heaven's Eye Technique by a substantial amount.

After using Imperial Flight Technique, Han Li felt his body become as light as a swallow. Just by lightly tapping his toe on the ground, he was able to flash by several tens of feet without expending the slightest effort. In addition, the high speed sensation of rushing through the air was so addicting that Han Li would wildly run around the valley five or six times on a daily basis. Aside from his small addiction, he became an expert of Qinggong.

(TL: Qinggong is a Chinese martial arts technique that involves running up a plank supported against a wall. In wuxia, the practitioner is eventually able to walk over water and travel as light as a feather, etc. For more information, here is a wikipedia link:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qinggong>)

Of course, this acceleration was different from acceleration achieved by using the technique "Shifting Smoke Steps". Shifting Smoke Steps was the

sect's secret technique that made the impossible possible by using a copious amount of power to increase speed within a short distance. This kind of movement technique could only reveal its greatest potential in narrow spaces.

In contrast, Imperial Flight Technique gradually used magic power in small amounts throughout its execution, minimizing the burden on the body. Han Li was capable of running wildly at will without developing any of the symptoms that were normally exhibited when the body was undergoing extreme stress. Moreover, this technique would continue until he ran out of magic power or until he willingly stopped supplying magic power. As a result, Imperial Flight Technique was an essential spell commonly used by low level cultivators while travelling across the land.

Chapter 75: Using Spells

Since mastering the Imperial Flight Technique, Han Li had become even more intrigued by the potential of the other two spells, “Soul-Lock Seal” and “Telekinesis Technique”, so he spent large amounts of time and energy, hoping that one day he could make a sudden breakthrough like he did with the Imperial Flight Technique and gain a flash of insight.

But after spending some time on valuable research, Han Li discovered that he was unable to use these two spells. It wasn't because of an inherent defect in Han Li's constitution, but rather because his body wasn't strong enough for either technique.

As described in the book, the Soul-Lock Seal was a type of charm that one had to prepare beforehand. Han Li used yellow paper that he bought from a nearby small town and followed the book's instructions, drawing the pattern with a writing brush.

Even though the book did not describe what materials should be used to create the seal, he kept thinking back to Doctor Mo's silver-colored seal. He naturally adopted the use of this precious and luxurious silver powder. Whether this material was effective or not, Han Li did not know, but his homemade seals soon looked exactly like the illustrations found in the book.

What a shame! Even though the seals' appearance was identical, it was still not enough.

Whenever Han Li performed the activation incantation, the writing on the magical seal would not emit a dazzling silvery light that had appeared back when Doctor Mo used the Soul-Lock Seal. Nothing strange or out of the ordinary occurred either. It was an utter failure, causing him to fall into a predicament with no room for improving it. He didn't know whether his failure was due to an error in chanting the incantation, his inability to grasp how to do it, or a mistake in creating the seal.

But after a more recent investigation, a different result was revealed.

After an intensive series of studies about materials, folklore, and spells,

Han Li finally discovered that the seals used by cultivators were not objects that ordinary mortals would recognize. They were not made of ordinary papers and materials, but rather materials that only cultivators would know how to process into seals. These materials could only be found in special areas accessible only to cultivators. Because of this, even though he had performed the incantation gesture perfectly, he never succeeded.

Telekinesis Technique also followed the same logic.

Han Li used to believe that he could cast the Telekinesis Technique on whatever item he casually picked. He practiced on common household items, such as knives, blades, etc, but failed in every attempt.

But now that Han Li was more informed, he finally understood that the Telekinesis Technique could only control objects that had been specially crafted for cultivators. It would not work on ordinary items.

As a result, Han Li took the weird and bizarre items he gained from Doctor Mo, including the Soul Luring Clock and the seven silver knives used in the Seven Soul Devouring Technique, and used them as a medium for the Telekinesis Technique. After some experimenting, however, not a single item could be used to perform the technique. This made Han Li be extremely disappointed. None of these items could be used with the Telekinesis Technique; he had no choice but to stop until he found a suitable object.

(TL: The Soul Luring Watch is the watch that Han Li and Doctor Mo used to control Crooked Soul)

Since he knew that his problem was a lack of suitable objects for the Soul-Lock Seal and the Telekinesis Technique, Han Li could only shift his attention elsewhere. He intended to take the other secret martial arts techniques and spells in order to combine them and increase his own strength, raising him to new levels in a relatively short period of time.

After entertaining this wild fantasy , Han Li once again resumed his bitter and difficult training. He quickly completed several small achievements.

After several attempts, he successfully fused together the Shifting Smoke Steps technique and the Imperial Flight Technique.

Although he thought of it as a fusion, it was actually just Imperial Flight Technique followed by Shifting Smoke Steps. The harmony and compatibility of the two techniques had to be carefully controlled; otherwise, mistakes would easily occur. For this reason, Han Li devoted quite a bit of energy and attention to these aspects.

But just with this, he was able to remove the disadvantages of the Imperial Flight Technique and the heavy energy consumption of the Shifting Smoke Steps, gradually perfecting both techniques. He appeared as a mixture of lightning and fire whenever he unpredictably shifted to the next location, appearing and disappearing in different spots.

Not long after, Han Li also gained a novel insight on a different application of the Fireball Technique.

Normally, the user would use their own magic to launch the small fireball towards the enemy. Although this was the technique's original function, Han Li thought that this was not the technique's limit.

A movement expert would be able to easily avoid the small fireball, which depended on one's magic power to fly slowly, thus restricting Han Li's ability to fight at close quarters against the cultivators of Jiang Hu. He might as well use only half of the energy he originally needed to cast the flashy Fireball Technique. When the fireball appeared, instead of shooting it out directly, he would first control it with his hands like a small blade, taking advantage of its destructive, unstoppable power.

Han Li was confident that he could easily kill any skilled opponent with his heavily modified technique.

With his new trump cards to rely on, Han Li could finally relax, no longer having to worry about his own ability. He could finally be confident enough to travel to the Lan Prefecture to get the antidote for the poison within Han Li's body.

(TL: Lan Prefecture was Doctor Mo's previous home, although this is the first time that it was mentioned by name)

In addition to perfecting his techniques, Han Li had been treating precious herbs as if they were snacks, eating them to break through to the eighth stage of the Eternal Spring Arts and thus allowing his magic power to greatly increase.

Simply based on the current density of his magic power, Han Li surpassed Yu Zhitong in his original corporeal form, but in terms of techniques, Han Li could not compare himself to him. Back when Yu Zhitong was cultivating in his clan, he had received pointers from his seniors and exchanged notes with his peers. He was much stronger than Han Li, a half a bottle of vinegar.

Han Li was not aware of this, but even if he were, he would not have been concerned. He was not arrogant enough to believe that learning one or two basic spells would allow him to compete and stand on even ground with other cultivators. His current enemies were still the mortals of the secular world, not the cultivators of Jiang Hu.

As a result, Han Li was not arrogant; instead, he was merely enjoying his own success. Just as he was preparing to find an excuse to leave the Seven Mysteries Sect, the Feral Wolf Gang suddenly suggested holding peace talks.

When the news spread, it caused the Seven Mysteries Sect to be in an uproar. In recent battles it had been the Feral Wolf Gang who had the upper hand, constantly pressuring the Seven Mysteries Sect. Under such circumstances, why would the Feral Wolf Gang want to engage in peace talks? Was it possible that there was a hidden trick? This raised suspicions within several people.

In a short period of time, calls for accepting and rejecting the peace talks rang out in succession within the Seven Mysteries Sect. All of the elite members had their own views. Li Feiyu was among those who stubbornly refused.

Those who opposed the peace talks and those who supported the talks voiced their opinions in equal clamors. Neither side could come out from the argument as a clear winner. In the end, Sect Leader Wang had to put

his foot down and make a decision. He declared that the Seven Mysteries Sect would hold the peace talks, and if the conditions weren't too ridiculous, then the two powerhouses would shake hands. If the conditions were too extravagant, they would continue fighting.

Even though this kind of filthy decision was unable to satisfy either party, it was the only compromise available. The Seven Mysteries Sect was forced to proceed in this manner.

(TL: The original Chinese said “mixed in mud”)

Chapter 76: Negotiations and Eruptions

After several discussions between the Seven Mysteries Sect and the Feral Wolf Gang, the two agreed to meet and discuss at a place called “Falling Sand Slope”, located between their two borders.

As for the members of the delegate teams who will participate in the discussions, the Feral Wolf Gang adamantly proposed that both sides must have one figure of high authority as an expression of good faith. Otherwises, there was no need to hold this discussion.

When this condition was brought forth, it did not cause an an uproar within the Seven Mysteries Sect since this was a very normal condition for negotiations.

Of course, neither side was willing to send their highest ranking elite to such a dangerous situation. The Seven Mysteries Sect would at most send out an auxiliary sect leader while the Feral Wolf Gang would sent out an auxiliary member of a similar status to maintain their reputation. Hence, this condition was not a problem.

As a result, both sides agreed on a set date for the negotiations, and when that day came around, both groups sent out a hundred or so members to join the meeting.

In order to prepare for any possible ambush the Feral Wolf Gang may set during the negotiations, the members of the Seven Mysteries Sect participating in the negotiations had made a meticulous back-up plan.

In addition to the delegate team, which consisted of five members, the remaining one hundred sect members formed a large squadron led by Vice Sect Leader Wu, the sect’s second strongest member. The one hundred sect members were all high level experts within the sect. These members were all known Protectors and were worshipped as core sect members. Among them included several Elders, Division Heads, high ranked members and the like. A squadron formed by such esteemed members was truly worth of being considered a grand battle formation

With so many experts forming the procession, even if the Feral Wolf

Gang's entire elite troops attacked at once, they would probably not be able to block the sect's advance. Each member of the Seven Mysteries Sect, from the highest to the lowest member, felt great deal of confidence.

For this reason, if there was anything that hinted foul play, the negotiators could depend on these highly skilled martial artists to quickly kill their way out of the entrapment and return to their own territory, where there would be countless numbers of sect brothers responsible for receiving them, assuring them a safe retreat.

Li Feiyu also volunteer to join. For him, who did not have much time to live, the more dangerous the place, the more his thirst to would grow.

Once the negotiation date approached, the procession that took up nearly half of the Seven Mysteries Sect's top experts set out on their journey. To them, this journey would take at least half a month's time and would be slow and arduous.

Han Li did not hold this matter with much importance. Whether or not the negotiations succeeded did not matter to him. He was getting ready to leave this place for the outside world to temper himself, so what did the rise and fall of the Seven Mysteries Sect have to do with him?!

As long as they did not involve him, he too lazy to care about the matter.

So during the days before the squadron would leave for the negotiation, he remained calm and leisurely about accelerating the growth of the medicinal herbs he might require in the future. Moreover, he started to collect a few precious seeds of herbs in preparation for future uses.

Han Li already decided that once the delegate team returned to the mountain, he would official say his farewells to a few members of the sect. If the sect's elite members were unwilling to let him leave, he did not mind revealing a bit of his true power in front of them for them to witness his might and completely give up on holding him back.

In reality, secretly leaving would be the most convenient option, but Han Li was worried that when they couldn't find him, they would cause trouble for his family. He decided that conspicuously bidding the sect's

elite members farewell while revealing a bit of his power to intimidate them was necessary.

As for his excuse for leaving, Han Li had already spent a long time thinking it through. All he needed to say was that he missed Doctor Mo and wanted to search for his master. As for whether the other believed him or not, Han Li did not care at all. With his power supporting him, how could he be worried about what they thought?

Whenever Han Li thought of this, he couldn't help but lift the corner of his mouth and reveal a hint of a cold smile. The current Han Li could extinguish the lives of a few sect members if he wanted, and it would be as easy as turning a palm.

Of course, these were all just thoughts. He would not do anything drastic like killing sect members.

But Han Li would have never imagined that four nights after the negotiating team left, a shabbily dressed person with long and unruly hair and covered from head to toe in dust would suddenly barge into his house. His eyes completely bloodshot, and with white lips, he hoarsely said to him a single breath:

"The negotiation team is finished. Sect Master Wu, the Protectors, the Consecrated Elders, the Elders...they're all dead."

Han Li was dumbstruck upon hearing this, but before he even opened his mouth to ask...

"Du...."

Suddenly from somewhere in the mountain range, a sharp and penetrating sentry warning rang through the air.

"Bang bang..."

It was followed by another wave of muffled sentry warnings.

"Dong, dong..."

"Ding ding..."

"Peng peng..."

All sorts of warning sounds rang out in the same manner, followed closely by countless cries of battle rising and falling in succession throughout the mountain. Among the noise was the faint sounds of weapons clashing against each other. In that one moment, the entire mountain area, which had been covered with serene clouds tinged with sunset hues, became a giant battleground where members were massacred.

Han Li's face changed. He was unable to continue listening to the man talking in front of him, and with a flash of his body, Han Li appeared outside of his residence. He quickly looked in all four directions, found the highest building, and slightly stamped his foot, his body appearing on top of the building. He then looked into the distance outside of the valley.

His visage became very unsightly and gloomy. Not far within his vision, the mountain seemed to be filled with flames that reached the skies, people rushing around, and sword flashes gleaming nonstop. Moreover, there were sounds of close combat everywhere. The warning sounds that rang out merged with angry shouts in a frenzied mass of noise.

Hearing the wind moving behind his back, he asked without turning his head: "Li Feiyu, is it the Feral Wolf Gang?"

"Yes. Who would have thought that they had planned so meticulously? After practically annihilating the negotiation team, they immediately moved up the mountain to slaughter the remaining survivors." The dusty informant with long and unruly hair was precisely Li Feiyu, who had left four days prior. His current voice was dripping with pent up rage, unwilling to accept the Feral Wolf Gang's actions.

Chapter 77: Countermeasure

“But what is strange is how they broke through the sentry outposts surrounding mountains. When we retreated back up the mountain, we clearly called out to the sentries to be on high alert,” Li Feiyu said to himself, full of doubt.

“There is nothing strange about this. The Feral Wolf Gang already made plans for this massive assault a long time ago. Secretly inserting spies within the sentries is an easy matter. It would be normal for the undiscovered spies to silently take over the sentry posts,” Han Li lightly said.

“But if the Feral Wolf Gang wanted to easily take over the different divisions, that would be impossible. I reckon that they plan to surround all the division halls on the mountain but not attack them. Then, they will gather all their experts to concentrate their attacks on the main division located at Setting Sun Summit. They only need to capture or kill the Sect Leader, and the rest will follow suit.”

“So what should we do now? Should we go to Setting Sun Summit?” Li Feiyu’s questions impatiently followed one another.

Han Li was speechless. After quite some time, he suddenly turned his body towards Li Feiyu and gravely said:

“You still haven’t told me something crucial. The negotiation team had so many highly skilled experts, so how could they be completely wiped out? Logically speaking, the Feral Wolf Gang shouldn’t have that much strength.”

Upon hearing these words, Li Feiyu’s facial muscles tensed for a moment, and he couldn’t help but stick out his tongue to lick his cracked lips. Revealing a hint of a bitter smiling expression, he said:

“They fired large quantities of crossbows in rapid succession. These crossbows happened to be military-grade.”

“Military-grade rapid fire crossbows?”

“That’s correct”

“It was our second day since we left the mountain. We were walking in a field, and since we were still in our own territory, everyone was pretty relaxed. In that moment, countless Feral Wolf Gang members appeared from all sides, and in each of their hand was a stiff crossbow. Soon, the sky was covered by a rain of crossbow bolts. The sneak attack caused those disciples with lacking martial art skills to die on the spot amidst the chaotic rain of bolts. Only a few martial art experts or the extremely lucky ones were able to dodge this first wave, but many carried injuries, which weakened their martial art skill by quite a bit. I am also one of those who were lucky; otherwise, I would not have made it back.”

Speaking up to this point, Li Feiyu still had some lingering fears, his eyes unconsciously revealing traces of dread. It seems like the image of a volley of crossbow bolts provoked quite a big reaction from Li Feiyu.

“After the volley of arrows, the others experts appeared, and everyone took part in a bitter battle. The remainder of our forces decided break apart our formation, going in separate ways in order to increase our chances of survival.”

“My luck was also good. In the enemy’s’ eyes, I was not high on their kill list, so only a few people followed me, and their martial arts skills were not very profound, allowing me to slaughter my way out. But as I was rushing back, I discovered that the Feral Wolf Gang had overrun our checkpoints one by one in quick succession. They were waiting for those who escaped the ambush to walk into their trap. After falling for the trap two times, I no longer dared to go seek help.”

“Because I wanted to know about the situation of other sect members, I later steeled my resolve and straightforwardly ambushed a Feral Wolf Gang Law Enforcer wearing blue clothes. From him, I found out that Sect Leader Wu and several other Elders have all died in battle at the hands of the countless experts that surrounded them, leaving only those who fled like me, who was not considered neither too important nor too weak.”

“After learning of this news, I did not dare to dally any longer and

rushed back up the mountain with all the strength I could muster. Halfway up, I coincidentally met two other people who, like me, had managed to escape death. Together, we continued to escape for one day and one night, finally returning back to the mountain.”

“Once we returned, the other two left for Setting Sun Summit to notify Sect Leader Wang that the negotiation team had been completely wiped out. I fabricated an excuse that I had to heal my wound and secretly came to meet with you in order to discuss our counter-attack.”

“Although Sect Leader Wu and countless others died during the ambush, a few disciples managed to escape. Our status within the sect is neither high nor low. Who knows if the higher ups will be driven by fury and place all the blame on us, making us scapegoats.”

“Even though I have not finished telling you everything, the Feral Wolf Gang is slaughtering its way up the mountain. You must tell me what we should do right now!”

Li Feiyu said all this in a single breath with a helpless expression.

Hearing this, Han Li wrinkled his eyebrow and tilted his head to think.

At this moment, the sounds of slaughter became all the more intense, and from time to time, the mournful sound of people dying would ring out, making those who hear it do nothing but tremble.

“Do you still have subordinates on the mountain?” Han Li asked, his voice becoming extremely solemn.

“Yes, I still have twenty some subordinates located in several houses near Elder Li’s residence. I originally planned to take them out to settle some matters after the negotiation team returned.”

“Okay then, we’ll first go to Elder Li’s residence to gather the others as well as to take the opportunity to meet up with Lady Zhang Xiuer and Elder Li. As for our next step, we will make a decision after we learn more about the situation,” Han Li calmly said, appearing to be extremely rational.

“Alright, I’ll listen to you.”

“Right now, it’s chaos outside, I am very worried about Xiuer!” Li Feiyu exclaimed with a bit of worry.

Han Li glanced at Li Feiyu, completely at a loss regarding his thoughts. On one hand, Li Feiyu was extremely worried about Zhang Xiuer, but on the other hand, he clearly understood that he did not have long to live yet he still adamantly wanted to marry her, clearly knowing that she would become a widow!

“This contradictory fellow!” Han Li secretly gave his good friend a not so pleasant evaluation.

Han Li lightly jumped and descended from the rooftop. Shortly afterwards Li Feiyu followed him down.

“Let me go gather some things, then we will leave immediately.”

“Alright, but you have to hurry. I’m really worried about Xiuer’s safety.”

Hearing this, Han Li could only remain speechless.

The other was constantly muttering “Xiuer”, sounding extremely sappy and making Han Li feel a bit of despise mixed with jealousy.

Han Li no longer continued to pay attention to the love-stricken Li Feiyu. He minded his own business and proceeded to enter his own house, starting to swiftly collect all sorts of different yet essential items.

Chapter 78: Forest Massacre

“Are you done?” Unable to hold himself back, Li Feiyu hurriedly asked Han Li upon seeing him walking out from his residence.

Han Li glared at Li Feiyu before walking to another smaller residence, closing the door, and coldly stating:

“Crooked Soul, come out. Tonight will all depend on you.”

Even before the sound of Han Li’s voice faded away, a “Peng” sound rang out. The wooden door was like a piece of paper, disintegrating into dust as the shadow of a huge body walked out.

Both of Li Feiyu’s eyes somewhat straightened as he froze. He gazed at that huge giant in front of him that was emitting an demonic aura. However, a hood was wrapped around its head, obscuring its features.

The huge giant silently walked behind Han Li.

“Let’s go!” Han Li smiled. Now, it was his turn to urge Li Feiyu along.

“Oh!” Li Feiyu gasped, as if he just awoken from shock.

He had a strange expression as he gazed from Han Li to the giant before closing his mouth and silently leading the way out of the valley.

Han Li stared at the back of Li Feiyu and he snickered before walking faster, catching up with his friend. The giant Crooked Soul followed closely behind.

Han Li was extremely pleased with Li Feiyu’s discreteness. This was because the both of them had mutual respect of their privacy. This was also one of the reasons why they became such close friends

Their walking speed was extremely quick, and in the blink of an eye, they had already arrived at the entrance of the valley. Just as Li Feiyu raised his leg to step into the forest, Han Li abruptly extended his right hand and caught Li Feiyu’s shoulder, stopping him from moving any further.

“What are you doing?” Li Feiyu asked, bewildered and dissatisfied. One

must know that his heart was very anxious, akin to a raging fire.

“There’s someone coming, and there’s more than just one of them,” Han Li gently explained.

Li Feiyu was shocked and immediately focused his senses to listen, but even after a long while, there was nothing to be heard.

Suspicion apparent in his eyes, he stared at Han Li, but Han Li disregarded his gaze and did not provide an explanation to him.

“You.....” Just as Li Feiyu opened his mouth, Han Li abruptly raised a finger, placing it upon his lips and signaling for Li Feiyu’s silence.

Li Feiyu furrowed his brows. Although he was extremely unwilling, because of force of habit, he decided to listen to Han Li and stayed silent.

Quite a while passed by. This time around, Li Feiyu’s expression grew heavy as he turned his head in amazement to gaze at Han Li. He had finally heard the sound of many footsteps ringing out; it seemed like there truly was a group of people.

“Enforcer Sun! Beside this forest, there’s both a huge bell-shaped valley and a small road. Seems like this is the God Hand Valley that the Vice Commander informed us of.” A brash sounding voice rang out from the direction of the forest.

“Right. According to the map and this huge bell shaped valley, there’s no mistake. This is the place. You all better remember, the Commander has issued an absolute order: we are to abduct the godly doctor alive. No one is allowed to hurt him; otherwise, that person will be dealt with according to rules of the gang. Understood?” Another sharp sounding voice rang out, akin to that of a mother hen commanding her little chicks.

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

.....

A series of confirmations sounded out at the same moment, and judging from the voices that replied out loud, there should have been over 10

people. Their breath-control seemed pretty strong, making them all seem like martial arts experts.

“Other than that blue-robed Enforcer, the rest of the Feral Wolf Gang are all Elites. The blue-robed Enforcer is akin to the Protectors from our sect, while the Elites were akin to the Inner Disciples,” Li Feiyu mumbled in a low voice, explaining to Han Li.

Li Feiyu knew that his good friend had never once shown the inclination to care about their sect’s matters, so he couldn’t be bothered to continue asking Han Li how he was able to notice the sound of the footsteps that far away. Instead, he opted to use the time to explain the situation and what their identities were to Han Li, intending to warn Han Li not to be careless.

The moment Han Li heard Li Feiyu speak, he instantly understood what Li Feiyu was trying to convey. He lightly smiled and said nothing. From the look on his face, it appeared that Han Li was extremely unconcerned.

Li Feiyu was growing increasingly more anxious.

“Based on my current strength, there’s no way to clash directly in a one-on-one fight with that blue-robed Enforcer, not to mention their Elites surrounding him. I know that you would usually have a lot of cunning plans, so quickly list whatever ideas you have! If not, it will soon be too late to take action.” Li Feiyu’s sentence was enunciated extremely quickly because the group of people had already entered into the forest and started to walk towards them.

“If not, let us temporarily hide first, evading the vanguard of our enemies.”

Li Feiyu suggested a seemingly excellent idea, but what was lamentable to Li Feiyu was that Han Li had no intention to heed his advice.

“Crooked Soul, other than that blue-robed Enforcer, I want you to annihilate everyone in that forest.” Han Li turned his head, looking at the giant man as he commanded in a cold tone.

“What?” Li Feiyu was thunderstruck after he heard the words that Han

Li had uttered.

But even before he recovered, that huge giant behind Han Li moved with the speed of a hurricane, rapidly dashing away in the pitch-dark forest. Almost immediately, the voices of the Feral Wolf Gang members cried out. “Ai Ya!”

“Ah!”

“Who is it?”

“Sh*t, there’s an ambush.”

“This..... what is this monster! Arghhh.....”

“Run, quickly! Arghh!”

.....

Mournful cries of shock rang out in the forest, turning into a cacophony of miserable shrieks before they slowly faded away. Before long, there was only silence.

Li Feiyu blankly stared in the direction of the forest with a face full of disbelief.

Chapter 79: Questioning

Similar to grabbing hold of a little chick, the huge giant carried the blue-robed man with a single hand and rapidly walked out of the forest. Its body, covered with blood stains coupled with the sight of its green robes, was similar to the brilliance of a blossoming peach flower.

Li Feiyu sucked in a breath of cold air.

As the huge giant walked in front of the two, it tossed the blue-robed man onto the ground. Shortly after, Li Feiyu could smell an acrid smell of blood wafting towards him.

Li Feiyu's expression underwent a tremendous change as he unconsciously stepped backwards, making a warding gesture with his hands.

The huge giant did not concern itself with Li Feiyu's actions; instead, it strode forward and stood behind Han Li, becoming silent and motionless as if it had never left that spot.

Only then did Li Feiyu let out a breath of air. He suddenly let out a laugh as he looked at the blue-robed man on the ground while surreptitiously stealing glances at the calm Han Li.

"I say, how can you still be so calm and collected! So the reason was because of the expert behind your back! Why didn't you tell me earlier? You caused me to panic this whole time." Although appearing very relaxed on the surface, Li Feiyu's heart was wildly trembling as he started to guess at the relationship between the green-robed giant and Han Li.

Han Li could tell what Li Feiyu was thinking, but he had no intention to explain anything to him. An enigmatic smile broke out on Han Li's visage as he calmly said:

"This blue-robed Enforcer should know plenty of information. Who among us is going to interrogate him? I feel that you, Division Head Li, should have more experience in this than me. Shall I leave him to you?"

(TL: This part is a bit confusing because it seems that he was demoted

from Vice Sect Leader to Division Head in this short period of time. If his status shifts back to Vice Sect Leader, we will go back and edit his title in this chapter)

Noting how Han Li dodged the question, he knew that Han Li had no intention of introducing the huge giant to him; as such, he couldn't help but feel worried in his heart.

However, regarding the interrogation of the Enforcer, he was extremely interested. After he heard Han Li's suggestion, he swiftly accepted the proposition like a boat flowing along with the current,.

Li Feiyu lifted the blue-robed man, lightly dashed into the forest, and started his interrogation while Han Li leisurely sat down on a nearby grass patch.

After a while, Li Feiyu came out of the forest with a gloomy look on his face.

"Why are you so fast? Is there any news that we could use?" Han Li didn't stand up; he merely twitched his brows as he asked.

"Hmph! That craven coward, I haven't even done anything to him, and he already told me everything. As for news, there are two pieces of information. One good and one bad. Which one do you want to hear about first?" Li Feiyu replied in a depressed manner.

"Give me the good news first! At least we would be happier after hearing it," Han Li indifferently said.

"The good news is that your guess regarding the Feral Wolf Gang's plan was right.

The auxiliary forces have no intention of initiating the attack instead want to surround the valley by taking possession of the other mountain peaks. Meanwhile, their main force is mobilizing towards the Setting Sun Summit to launch an aggressive attack. He said that they have already gained control of many important outposts." Li Feiyu sounded calm as though he did not care about the safety of those with high level of authority.

“If that was the good news, there’s no need to ask. The bad news must be truly terrible.” Han Li rubbed his nose as he said this with confidence.

“Crow mouth, you are spot on. The bad news is that several small sects, such as the Metal Spear Association and the Broken Water Sect, have joined the Feral Wolf Gang’s attack against the Celestial Rainbow Mountains. It Seems like our Seven Mysteries Sect is going to face an imminent catastrophe.”

(TL: “Crow mouth”: a person who always says pessimistic things)

Han Li froze in shock after hearing the news; this was outside of his expectations.

“We shouldn’t care about the number of attackers; it would be best to meet up your young beloved and underlings and leave here under the cover provided by the chaotic battle.” Han Li was quite collected as he made a rational suggestion.

Li Feiyu quickly indicated his consent, as this plan suited his needs.

“And that fellow, how did you handle him?” Han Li suddenly asked

“I killed him. Are you saying that we should have brought him along?” Li Feiyu coldly replied.

After hearing this, Han Li let out a small smile as he put one hand on the ground and sprung up from his sitting position.

“Let’s go! We should try to avoid any enemies. If we are unable to do so, kill all those who discover us; there is no need to show mercy.” Han Li had spoken lightly, but his words contained boundless killing intent and bloodlust.

A few li away from God Hand Valley, Elder Li’s courtyard was currently swamped with people. There were males and females, all young and old. They appeared to know not the slightest bit of martial arts and were discussing something in low voices with frightened expressions on their faces.

Two black-robed figures, equipped with swords and sabers, were nearby

the courtyard, guarding vigilantly. Compared to the people inside the courtyard, they were extremely eye-catching.

In the living room of one of the residences, two people were in the middle of a discussion.

“I object to sending people outside. Our defensive position here is not that strong; if I still send people out, wouldn’t our position weaken further? No, absolutely not!” A middle-aged fatty with a huge pot belly sprayed saliva all over the place as he shook his head rapidly, objecting with determination.

“But we have no idea what’s going on out there. If we don’t send people to scout, wouldn’t that be akin to blinding ourselves? This is too passive.” The person who was arguing against the fatty was none other than Ma Rong—Elder Li’s cherished disciple.

“Passive? So be it. The things that happen out there have nothing to do with me, and to me, safety is most important. This is the best place to be in this situation. Don’t tell me you are going to defy my orders?” The fatty blinked his small eyes and suddenly took out a golden yellow tablet from his robes, shaking the command medallion in front of Ma Rong as a look of insufferable arrogance appeared on his face.

Ma Rong glanced at the fatty before looking at the command medallion. Sighing, he cupped his hands and replied, “The little me does not dare. I shall follow your esteemed orders.”

Chapter 80: Encountering the Enemy

This command medallion was equivalent to having Sect Leader Wang's personal authority. To possess the medallion enabled one to command all the disciples with a rank lower than an Elder. This fatty happened to be Sect Leader Wang's trusted aide, who was rumored to be Sect Leader Wang's close cousin. Therefore, any orders or messages that Sect Leader Wang had would be communicated through this man.

Not long ago, Sect Leader Wang had granted this command medallion in a hurry, relying on the fatty to ask Elder Li, who was up on the mountaintop, to discuss certain matters. However, after this fatty finished relaying orders, he felt that immediately hurrying back after sunset would be too exhausting. By taking advantage of the dutiful trust bestowed on him, he stayed at Elder Li's mansion to take a moment of rest before returning down the mountain.

Elder Li helplessly accommodated him because he did not dare to offend him. He arranged for Zhang Xiuer and several other disciples to take him down the mountain as soon the sun set.

After a short amount of time, however, momentous changes occurred on the mountaintop due to the Feral Wolf Gang's assault. This fatty's cowardice was incomparable, so naturally, he was unwilling to return alone.

However, the people in the courtyard were the many family members of the disciples belonging to the Seven Mystery Sect. Most of them did not know any martial arts, and because of their inability, they lost their heads from fear once the sound of chaos reached them. What could they possibly do?

Fortunately, Ma Rong was quite decisive. He promptly requested help from the twenty disciples that Li Feiyu left under his control and gathered all of them together. Since they were all rounded up, they were prevented from running amok in the night and encountering any mishaps.

Because this place was quite remote and built on the mountain pass,

these people would not understand anything that was going on. Even if they had heard the alarm and the loud battle cries, in the end, all the noise belonged to affairs that happened outside—they wouldn't understand what was happening.

Thus, after Ma Rong had quickly finished analyzing the situation, he planned to dispatch a few people to go outside and ask around for news. At this time, the fatty, who was incapable of even the slightest ability in martial arts, acted under false pretenses. Not only did he prevent them from scouting for information, he also relied on the command medallion to snatch away Ma Rong's authority over these Outer Sect junior disciples. After that, he planned to secure the location and bury his head in the sand.

Ma Rong knew the importance of having accurate information about the enemy. He tried discussing this matter of importance several times with the fatty, but the fatty was too scared to care. Because the fatty was abusing the authority of Sect Leader Wang's command medallion, Ma Rong wasn't even allowed to personally scout around. It seemed apparent that the fatty thought Ma Rong was his personal guard for the preservation of his life.

As such, Ma Rong was inside the living room, as anxious as a cat on a hot tin roof, and walked around in circles. Nevertheless, he still followed this ignorant fatty. In the Seven Mysteries Sect, harsh discipline was given to those who disobeyed orders and took actions without permission.

Light offenses were punished by the destruction of one's cultivation and expulsion from the sect. However, it would be difficult to preserve one's life if he or she had committed a heavy offense because the only punishment available was beheading the offender. Ma Rong was fully aware that the world-shaking events occurring outside could likely be a matter of life or death for the sect, but he was unable to move a single step.

At this moment, Ma Rong wished that he could slap this so called "superior" to death. Meanwhile, Han Li and Li Feiyu did not have the slightest knowledge about what was happening, so they were hurrying to

Elder Li's residence as a result.

On the journey there, they met several bandits and had to either avoid or dodge around their enemies. They also hid their tracks as frequently as possible. When they were only a li away (half a kilometer) from Elder Li's residence, they ran directly into a group of black-clothed people and thus were unable to conceal their presence. This was their first encounter with the enemy.

Currently, there were over ten black-clothed people holding steel sabers. They surrounded Han Li, Li Feiyu, and Crooked Soul from every direction.

From examining their footwork, it seemed to Han Li that those who had a single line of white embroidery on their sleeves were the weakest of the group as well as the majority of the members. The martial artists with two white lines embroidered on their sleeves were a little stronger, but the strongest opponents were the ones with three white lines. It was clear that the man with scars on his face was the leader of this group.

As the scar-faced leader carefully sized up the men whom he had surrounded, he secretly felt somewhat baffled.

It was not surprising that the scar-faced leader felt this way. Standing in the middle of the trio, Li Feiyu had disheveled hair, and his appearance was dirty and worn; he looked as if he were a cook from the mountains. Han Li's eyes were emotionless, while his skin was dark like a farmer who did not know martial arts. However, their lofty builds had produced greater pressure. They also wore bamboo hats. Besides them was a bloodstained Crooked Soul.

Standing together, these three seemed out of place as they stood together. Even though the scar-faced leader had plenty of experience in Jiang Hu, he was somewhat puzzled.

He sent a gaze toward his subordinates, signalling at them to not let their guard down. He then loudly yelled toward the opposing party, "Regardless of who you are, the Seven Mysteries Sect has already fallen. Surrender and your lives will be spared!"

Han Li smiled, turned his head to Li Feiyu, and said, "Who will handle this? Or would you rather have Crooked Soul take care of this?"

As Li Feiyu heard his words, his eyes flashed with an ominous glint. He sternly replied, "From these people's clothes, they should be low level disciples of the Broken Water Sect. I've hunted and killed bandits from the Feral Wolf Gang for a long time. Let me vent my resentments onto them. Besides, it just so happens that I have a use for their weapons."

By the time Li Feiyu had finished talking, the enemy forces were fanned out like a rainbow. In a blink of an eye, Li Feiyu was already in front of the closest man dressed in black.

The man in black was surprised and almost forgot about flourishing his steel saber. However, he found that the saber in his hands were suddenly in the hands of his enemy. He hastily recoiled in panic, but it was already too late. A line of light flashed, separating his head from his body.

With a series of movements that were neat, nimble, and as quick as lightning, Li Feiyu had already killed many of the Broken Water Sect disciples with the stolen saber before they could react against him.

The complexions of the people who remained began to greatly change, especially the leader with the disfigured face. Because his martial arts were far greater than the others, his heart had sunk the furthest. He clearly remembered encountering disastrous experts in the past. Back then, he couldn't contend against them in the least; therefore he decisively commanded, "Everyone, retreat! Scatter! Quickly send out the signal and call the experts for reinforcements."

This sentence caught the attention of the other men in black clothes, and they quickly fell back. Because of their original positioning in a circle, they scattered in all directions, fleeing rapidly. Some had run to the side, grabbing something from their bosom. They seemed to have fished out the so-called signal.

A black-clothed man with two embroidered lines ran the fastest. With just a few steps, he had already fled several zhang.

(TL: 1 zhang is equal to 10 chi, or 3.58 meters)

He secretly rejoiced, thinking that there was some hope in fleeing for his life. However, he failed to notice a cool feeling on the back of his neck. A half-inch point pierced through his adam's apple and then immediately disappeared without a trace. Seeing this, he couldn't help but be overwhelmed with shock. He wanted to yell at the top of his lungs, but suddenly he couldn't feel his body. Losing all his strength, he stared helplessly at his body as he slowly collapsed, his back limp on the floor. He was no longer capable of moving even a single step.

At this moment, he realized that a sword had unexpectedly penetrated his throat.

This black-clothed person felt unresigned. He had obviously escaped the furthest, so how could he have died so quickly?

With great effort, he turned his head to the side. Facing death's door, he saw in his final moments an intermittent shadow that had appeared behind the second furthestmost distant black-clothed man. With a slash as light as a feather, the shadow flashed and faded away. After that, another fellow sect disciple appeared, and a similar white light flashed. The sword pierced the throat of a fellow sect disciple yet again. Like him, their bodies fell onto the meadow with blood leaking from their throats.

After witnessing the shadow's assassinations, this black-clothed man smiled and accepted his death because he knew he would not be the only one to die. Many would soon accompany him. That shadow was like a demon, and it was unlikely that a single one of the black-clothed disciples could slip away from this demon's grasp.

Chapter 81: Jia Tianlong

At this moment, “Golden Wolf” Jia Tianlong appeared smug. Because of the excitement, his normally pale and gloomy face had a slight flush.

It was no wonder that he had such an expression. After all, the Seven Mysteries Sect was Feral Wolf Gang’s archenemy. Under his elaborate scheme, all those who were still alive would fall before him. As the Commander of Feral Wolf Gang, he had the right to be arrogant.

He stood halfway between the base of the mountain and Setting Sun Summit. As it turned out, there were around fifty to sixty red-clothed members of the Feral Wolf Gang’s Iron Guard surrounding the sentry post on the border of Seven Mysteries Sect. Jia Tianlong had spent a substantial amount of painstaking effort to meticulously groom his army. Not only were they all highly capable in martial arts, they also had undying loyalty to Jia Tianlong.

He had always regarded this army as a precious asset and would not normally utilize it in ordinary battles. However, at this moment, he brought the entire army with him just to completely intimidate the small and mid-sized gangs that were beginning to stir up trouble. The chiefs of Metal Spear Association and Broken Water Sect, who had been planning to rebel, were forced to obediently listen to his orders.

After all, the smaller gangs did not wish to see Feral Wolf Gang standing alone. They all hoped that the two great powers would forever be in the midst of a struggle, creating cracks in which the smaller gangs could exist.

Jia Tianlong did not have a decisive personality. Had it not been for the fact that Jia Tianlong had kidnapped the children of the gang chiefs as well as promised the smaller gangs a profit for helping the Feral Wolf Gang in this endeavor, the smaller gangs would have changed sides a long time ago.

At this thought, Jia Tianlong involuntarily turned his head back to glance at several of the gang chiefs that were standing nearby.

All of the people present were downcast. Seeing Jia Tianlong gaze towards them, they either glared back at him or avoided looking at him in the face.

Looking at this situation, Jia Tianlong laughed coldly in his heart. Returning his attention to his front, he started thinking of a plan to annex all these small gangs after he took down the Seven Mysteries Sect.

In front of Jia Tianlong, there were close to a thousand men present, all wearing different kinds of clothes and holding different weapons. They attacked the Seven Mysteries Sect's sentry posts like a swarm of bees. Because there was no formation due to the neglect of cooperation between these people, there were a lot of casualties.

However, Jia Tianlong did not care because the people who were currently attacking were not from his Feral Wolf Gang. They were people that belonged to the Metal Spear Association and the Broken Water Sect. In the first place, he did not place any hope in their ability to take over Setting Sun Summit. He only wanted them to waste the sentries' energies, so that his elite troops and crossbows could easily pick off the remaining exhausted sentries.

Thinking of those military-grade rapid-fire crossbows, Jia Tianlong's calm expression revealed a trace of delight.

This time, the Feral Wolf Gang easily gained a winning advantage through the killing machines that were used by the gang's troops.

Otherwise, it would have been impossible to annihilate the opponent's troops. Even if a dozen of the Setting Sun Summit's sentry posts were taken down, the Feral Wolf Gang's troops would suffer a great loss in strength, making it very detrimental for his future plan to annex the smaller gangs.

Jia Tianlong did not spend a slightest bit of effort on the military-grade crossbows; instead, they appeared out of nowhere in his home.

Every time Jia Tianlong recalled that matter, he would immediately feel at ease.

This happened three months ago when he was at his headquarters, planning an assault on the Seven Mysteries Sect. Out of the blue, there was an officer claiming to be his relative who wanted to see him. Jia Tianlong felt somewhat astonished and met with that person. It turned out that the person was truly his older cousin from his father's side. Apparently, around ten years ago, when Feral Wolf Gang was still a group of horse-mounted bandits, a portion of the gang had been ordered by the Jing Province's imperial court to enlist in the army in return for amnesty. This cousin was among that group of men. As years went by, his cousin was unexpectedly landed the position of Deputy General in the army. Coincidentally, when his cousin was on the road escorting some goods across Jing Province, he had heard of Jia Tianlong, Commander of Feral Wolf Gang. He naturally had to come and visit this cousin of his.

When the two people had met, they exchanged some rueful greetings. Then, they both had talked about their experiences over the years. As Jia Tianlong mentioned the recent skirmishes against the Seven Mysteries Sect, his cousin off-handedly proclaimed that their resistance would quickly fall if he provided Jia Tianlong with a hundred rapid-fire crossbows of good quality. Jia Tianlong would be able to kill everyone in the Seven Mysteries Sect until there was no one left.

Though his cousin might have mentioned it casually, Jia Tianlong listened with intent as his heart skipped a beat. He tried asking his cousin if it was possible to give him the hundred crossbows. His cousin slightly laughed and told Jia Tianlong honestly that the goods he was transporting were exactly these rapid-fire crossbows. It was not that he could not give Jia Tianlong any, but rather that he could not give away too many. He only had to bribe the government officials receiving the goods with a few taels of silver.

Jia Tianlong rejoiced at what his cousin said and spent the two silvers at once, exchanging them for three hundred rapid-fire crossbows from his cousin. Jia Tianlong entrusted them to his trusted subordinates to utilize them well, resulting in the recent series of victories.

“Their defense has been broken!”

“There’s a breach!”

.....

A burst of earthshaking sounds rang out, startling Jia Tianlong from his thoughts.

He was somewhat shocked and hastily raised his head to look towards the mountain peak, only to see that the Seven Mysteries Sect’s sentry posts had really been breached and were jam-packed with people from the smaller gangs.

Jia Tianlong wrinkled his brows as he felt that something was a bit strange. According to the strength of the defending guards, it was reasonable to say that the last stretch ought to be even more difficult to attack. How could it be taken down by some miscellaneous troops? Perhaps there was some other conspiracy in play?

A gloomy expression appeared on his face. Any one that was familiar with Commander Jia Tianlong would know that this was a sign that he was not pleased in his heart. If anyone provoked him during this time, that person would wish he or she was dead.

“Since it has been breached, why are we not moving?” A voice sounding like a broken gong rang out. There was no hint of respect for Commander Jia Tianlong contained in that sentence.

Commander Jia Tianlong would have been extremely angry, but instead, he turned around and respectfully said, “Master Zhang, I feel that there is something fishy about this breach. I’m afraid there might be a trap located inside. It’s better to be a bit more cautious!”

“What are you afraid of? With me by your side, how can these ordinary people even be able to hurt you? Let’s go, let’s go! I’ve been here for close to an entire night, I’m extremely tired. The faster we dispose of these Seven Mysteries Sect bastards, the faster I can rest my old bones.” This voice did not sound old at all, but he let out an overflowing archaic tone that was very irritating to the ear.

Chapter 82: Saint of Golden Light

The person who spoke was a three feet tall dwarf standing beside Jia Tianlong.

The dwarf was forty years old and had a thin body frame that was covered by a red robe embroidered with gold thread. On his finger and around his neck were, respectively, a gold ring and an extremely thick gold chain. Around his waist, several gold bells hung from his belt. Even his gold teeth reflected a golden light whenever he opened his mouth. This was a look that only the rich could afford to have.

At this moment, impatience clouded his features; evidently, he was extremely unsatisfied with Jia Tianlong's cautiousness.

Disguised as a wealthy merchant from a village, the dwarf actually dared to show such disrespect towards Jia Tianlong. This caused the loyal Iron Guards standing nearby to glare at the dwarf with extreme rage smouldering in their eyes.

This dwarf could obviously see the rage within the eyes of Jia Tianlong's loyal Iron Guards, and he coldly laughed, as if he did not put them in his eyes at all. He even arrogantly stated:

“Commander Jia, you spent 3,000 taels of gold to invite me over. Surely the money you spent was not just for me to passively stare in vain for an entire night, correct?! Whoever you need me to deal with, just tell me directly. However, you don't need me to deal with the Sect Leader of the Seven Mysteries Sect, right? Against such a weak person, you can just settle it yourself. Why do you still need to spend money and hire me for assistance?”

“Just a mere Sect Leader of the Seven Mysteries Sect truly does not warrant the attention of Immortal Master. The reason why I invited Immortal Master was because the Sect Leader of the Seven Mysteries Sect still has three senior martial uncles. On the surface, these three people have been declared dead, but in reality, they have been undergoing closed-door cultivation inside a hidden chamber on Setting Sun Summit. I'm

afraid that their current cultivation bases have already broken through to the Transformation Realm. Against these martial uncles, ordinary experts would not be a match for them. These three people are the strongest pillars of the Seven Mysteries Sect; thus, I have no choice but to humbly beseech Immortal Master to deal with them for us.” Jia Tianlong sounded extremely pathetic, without a hint of anger in his voice.

Jia Tianlong had coincidentally met this red-robed dwarf in a Daoist temple near the border of the Savage Lands. A self-proclaimed “Saint of Golden Light”, this martial arts expert was equipped with immense magical powers, and he had demonstrated techniques for controlling flying swords and cultivating an invulnerable steel body.

After Jia Tianlong personally witnessed this, he was deeply mesmerized by the might displayed by the two techniques. When he suspected that the dwarf was most likely someone who had walked the fabled path of Immortals, he decided to establish a relationship with him.

After knowing that the dwarf had an extreme obsession with gold, Jia Tianlong immediately gifted a huge amount of gold to the dwarf. With this, he had finally moved the dwarf’s heart, obtaining a promise that the dwarf would help him with his problems just once.

Thus, Jia Tianlong acted meek and humble like someone from the junior generation whenever he was in the dwarf’s presence, not daring to reveal the slightest bit of disrespect. He was very clear in his heart: this Saint of Golden Light was someone that his tiny Feral Wolf Gang was unable to contend with.

After the Saint of Golden Light heard his request, he let out a crazed laughter. Once his laughter subsided, he exclaimed arrogantly, “Just a few mortals? Leave them to me! No matter how high their cultivation bases have reached, no matter how strong their martial arts are, they would definitely not be a match for my flying sword technique! You can just relax!”

“Then, I will have to trouble Immortal Master. The rewards I promised will definitely be delivered, and what’s more, I’ve decided that after the

matter is settled, the reward will be increased by 2,000 taels of gold.” Jia Tianlong appeared overjoyed as he increased the reward without hesitation. After all, he knew that his helper was certainly not amiable. It was better if he directly used gold to speak.

After the Saint of Golden Light heard this, traces of a smile broke out on his wizened face. He nodded his head in satisfaction, obviously happy with the increased reward.

After obtaining the guarantee of such a powerful figure, the Saint of Golden Light, Jia Tianlong no longer remained cautious and commanded his forces from the Feral Wolf Gang to rush to the top of the Setting Sun Summit to prepare to attack the main division of the Seven Mysteries Sect—the Seven Supreme Division.

Because there were so many people rushing up the summit, Jia Tianlong and the rest of the Iron Guard had to expend tremendous effort to finally arrive at the entrance of the division.

Staring at the main division of his most hated enemy, Commander Jia was still taken aback by the majesty of the Seven Supreme Division Hall. He felt that the main hall of his Feral Wolf Gang was nothing but a dog tunnel, unbearable to be looked upon when compared to this place.

Looking at the empty acres of land on top of Setting Sun Summit, there were quite a number of halls constructed from bluestone—one large building, followed by six smaller ones.

Although the dim light from the torches was insufficient to fully see the details of the buildings in the dark of the night, the imposing and majestic aura of the bluestone halls was still capable of astonishing the members of Feral Wolf Gang and the other small sects. The attackers did not immediately start their attack, but rather surrounded the bluestone halls, with the intent to not even allow a single fly pass through.

“Indeed, our opponent is a sect that has existed for over 200 years; this level of wealth simply could not be matched by the clans and sects that have only existed for a decade. How extravagant!” Jia Tianlong silently exclaimed in his heart.

He had already decided that once the Seven Mysteries Sect was eliminated, he would immediately move over to the main bluestone hall and designate it as his center of command. Such a majestic building would only benefit a status such as his own.

Jia Tianlong glanced at the main hall's pitch-black entrance. After observing his surroundings, he slowly raised his right hand into the air.

In that moment, silence descended upon the people surrounding the Setting Sun Summit as the gazes of the crowd turned to Jia Tianlong's hand. They knew that once the arm was swung down, it would signal the start of the attack.

"Wait."

Suddenly, a cold voice drifted over from the pitch-black main hall.

"Pa da" "Pa da"

A wave of footsteps rang out from within as the sound grew clearer and clearer.

Finally, a white-robed, middle-aged man emerged. This figure had a wooden hairpin on, and the only equipment he had on his body was a longsword in a white scabbard. His face was incomparably pale, but his eyes were bright. Wherever he looked, those who met his gaze felt as if sharp swords had cut into their hearts, causing them to shiver despite the warm air.

After leaving the hall and walking ten meters away, he stopped as he slowly contemplated the crowd standing in front of him, without a trace of fear in his eyes.

Finally, his vision landed upon Jia Tianlong's right hand that was raised up in the air. His gaze moved from Jia Tianlong's right arm to Jia Tianlong's face.

"Jia Tianlong." This middle-aged man shouted out the name of Commander Jia.

"Wang Juechu." Not wanting to appeared weak, Jia Tianlong also

shouted out the name of his adversary.

“Speaking of which, this is the first time that we’ve met face to face as the respective leaders of our individual camps, is it not? My dear Sect Leader Wang!” Jia Tianlong used a leisurely tone as traces of a mocking smile hung upon his lips. He slowly retracted his extended right arm from the air.

Wang Juechu stared expressionlessly at Jia Tianlong without saying anything. The atmosphere began to grow increasingly tense.

“Sect Leader Wang came to this place alone, could it be that you intend to surrender?” Smiling, Jia Tianlong asked this question with a hint of ridicule

“You are correct. I wanted to discuss with you matters regarding a surrender,” the Seven Mysteries Sect’s Sect Leader, Wang Juechu, replied icily, similar to an sculpture made of frigid snow.

Chapter 83: A Huge Pitfall

“Do you truly plan to surrender?” Jia Tianlong felt somewhat surprised.

“To surrender is to surrender. However, which side will surrender to whom? That has not yet been decided!” Saying this slowly, Sect Leader Wang narrowed his eyes and consciously brought his hand to the longsword’s hilt.

“What is the meaning behind your words?” Jia Tianlong’s face sank, but soon after, he waved his hand, signaling his men to surround Sect Leader Wang.

Immediately, his Iron Guards rushed forth from behind him and surrounded Wang Juechu in a semicircle. At the same time, they took out powerful crossbows. With flashes of green light, the Iron Guards pointed their crossbow bolts at him.

It seemed that with a single command from Jia Tianlong, they would indiscriminately release a barrage of arrows without hesitation, immediately shooting at Wang Juechu on the spot.

“You believe that just because we moved the sect’s lower ranked disciples to Setting Sun Summit, we had never thought of an external enemy invasion and thus were incapable of resisting?” Sect Leader Wang’s voice contained a somewhat menacing and sinister tone as he seemed to have turned a blind eye to the crossbow bolts.

Hearing these words, Jia Tianlong’s heart slightly sunk. His mind felt a trace of obscure foreboding. He didn’t interrupt the Sect Leader Wang’s words and instead continued to have a gloomy expression on his face. Jia Tianlong wanted to hear what his enemy ultimately had to say.

“The one who migrated the sect to this location was the seventh generation Sect Leader, Sect Leader Li. Not only did that person have great skill and strategies, he was also an expert in construction and machinery. He was named the top genius of his generation.” With this said, Sect Leader Wang shortly paused, expressing a hint of admiration.

He opened his mouth and continued: "Sect Leader Li selected Setting Sun Summit as the sect's main hall. There were two reasons for this. One reason is that the mountain peak is dangerous. Because it is easy to guard and hard to attack, it is an exceptional defensive location strategically. The second reason is that within the center of this mountain peak lies a vast natural stalactite cave. This cave is wonderful beyond compare. It occupies nearly two-thirds of the Setting Sun Summit. Seeing this marvel, Sect Leader Li made plans in his mind to integrate of all the construction techniques he possessed with the terrain of the stalactite cave, and he turned the entire mountain peak into a huge natural pitfall. So long as there were people to activate the mechanism, the entire mountain peak would immediately collapse, burying all the people on the summit."

After Sect Leader Wang finished talking, he stayed silent. He swept his eyes over the crowd before him with a cold gaze that one would use on a corpse.

After Jia Tianlong finished hearing this, he stood in amazement. He naturally did not believe the opposition's words, but after a few moments, he did not know how he would refute Sect Leader Wang's menacing words.

The others on the mountain clearly heard these words. They all couldn't help but become restless and talk about it softly. A few of the somewhat clever ones had even begun to slowly draw closer to the only road off the mountain. They were prepared to wildly rush off the mountain the moment something went wrong.

"Silence! Those clamoring or flailing about will be killed mercilessly!"

Jia Tianlong quickly regained his calm. Seeing his own men turn disorderly on just a bluff, he couldn't help but become irritated. He knew that if he did not immediately put a stop to their restlessness, the situation would become a lot harder to control. He soon acted without thinking and loudly issued a stern command.

Jia Tianlong's order was well executed by his loyal subordinates. After they beheaded a few of the cowards that had attempted to escape, the rest

were intimidated and quelled, their roars suppressed.

However, Jia Tianlong understood that this suppression was only superficial and temporary. If he could not confirm what the opponent had said were lies, regardless of what gang or faction the men belonged to, they would all be unable to stay here at ease. He feared that this rumor would spread and cause all of them to flee.

“You can’t convince us that your words are true on the mere basis that you said them!” Jia Tianlong strongly restrained the anger in his heart, intending to personally expose Sect Leader Wang’s fabrication.

“Of course not. I have plenty of proof. Just stay here and see it for yourself. Regardless of whether or not you heard properly, if someone were to see my proof and intends to escape or possibly continue their assault, I would activate the entire mechanism and end us all.” Wang Juechu’s words were filled with desire to kill as his menacing intentions were undoubtedly revealed.

Jia Tianlong carefully examined his enemy’s expression, trying to find some mistake or gap in his state of mind. Unfortunately, Wang Juechu’s face was ice cold through and through. No indication of falsehood had appeared, nor was the slightest degree of false confidence shown.

Jia Tianlong couldn’t help but murmur to himself, “Don’t tell me that Sect Leader Wang’s words were not a deception, but rather an actual scheme to destroy anyone on the summit, including the sect?”

“Activate the second mechanism!” Wang Juechu suddenly turned his head to the sect hall and loudly commanded.

He then turned his head to the side and began staring at the comparatively small stone hall, no longer paying attention to Jia Tianlong.

Seeing his opponent look down on him in such way, Jia Tianlong couldn’t help but be angry. With great difficulty, he resisted the anger in his heart and inwardly resolved himself. So long as the opponent’s evidence did not satisfy him, he would immediately give the order to turn this Sect Leader Wang into a human-shaped hedgehog.

However, Wang Juechu's strange stare towards the stone hall had aroused the attention of the Feral Wolf Gang members. They couldn't help but turn their gazes as well, wanting to see if anything strange would occur.

The Feral Wolf Gang members were all restless. None of them took notice of two people wearing Broken Water Sect clothing lowering their heads and whispering.

"Han Li, do you think what our Sect Leader said was true? Don't tell me that this huge Setting Sun Summit is truly hollow? I have come here several times before and never felt anything amiss in this place."

"Could it be that Sect Leader Wang is trying to deceive them in order to stall for time?"

"Maybe..."

A young man was talking to a taciturn youth in the midst of the crowd, discussing the offensive. It seemed that they had great doubts regarding Wang Juechu's explanation.

These two people were not bystanders, but were in fact Han Li and Li Feiyu, who had rushed to Elder Li's residence in disguise.

Chapter 84: A Tremendous Battle

Earlier, Han Li was afraid that the Broken Water Sect's disciples would escape and alert the other enemies, so he had to personally get involved. Using Shifting Smoke Steps and Imperial Flight Technique in unison, he easily killed all the enemies in a short span of time. Li Feiyu, who was thinking of continuing his attack, was dumbstruck. Only then did he realize Han Li's true strength.

After recovering from his dazed state, Li Feiyu was shocked that Han Li was able to possess such astonishing skill. Han Li's battle prowess was a result of cultivating Blinking Sword Art.

This kind of thinking caused him to panic the moment he stepped up into the arena and immediately disturb his own inner strength, wishing he had cultivated in the Blinking Sword Art. Luckily, he knew the bitter truth— regardless of time or aptitude, it was too late for him to switch to a different sword art.

Further down the road, Li Feiyu continuously threw up his heart's grief and sighed heavily at the lucky bastard, Han Li, for being able to learn such a terrifying skill.

Han Li was not in the mood to comprehend his good friend's sour mood. Instead, he started to ruthlessly kill all the enemies he met, intending to reveal his true strength.

All the enemies that encountered Han Li's strange technique were neither able to withstand nor receive a single blow. They all breathed their last breath of air, and even the high-ranked experts were no exception.

With Han Li's exhibition of might, the two of them easily reached Elder Li's residence and saw Ma Rong. They received news from Ma Rong that Elder Li and Zhang Xiuer had already ascended Setting Sun Summit.

Upon hearing this grievous news, Li Feiyu's face turned green.

He knew that the current Setting Sun Summit was an extremely

dangerous place. Zhang Xiuer entering that area was like setting a foot into the Gates of Hell.

With the lack of a better option, the two of them discussed for a moment and came out of Elder Li's residence, hurriedly heading towards to the direction of Setting Sun Summit. But upon their departure, there was a minor disturbance.

When the two of them were about to leave, that loathsome fatty, the trusted aide of Sect Leader Wang, took out the command medallion and ordered them threateningly to stay behind or else he would deal with them according the Sect's rules.

Currently, Li Feiyu was very impatient as he was only concerned with Zhang Xiuer's safety. He could care less about the Sect rules, so he extended his hand and knocked the long-winded fatty unconscious to the ground. Then, he ordered his subordinates to continue protecting everyone while he and Han Li turned and left quickly.

When they reached the vicinity of Setting Sun Summit, the two of them were frightened by the sheer numbers of enemies. Knowing that it was impossible to charge forward, Han Li and Li Feiyu discussed with each other and came up with a brilliant plan.

They knocked out two disciples of Broken Water Sect and changed into their clothes. Then, they took advantage of the dark sky and the crowd's confusion to stealthily mix in with those who were about to attack the mountain, follow the stream of traffic, and easily reach Setting Sun Summit. There, Han Li and Li Feiyu had heard everything that Sect Leader Wang had said. Because Crooked Soul's body was too conspicuous, they found an area at the bottom of the mountain in which they could hide him and left him there.

After hearing that the Setting Sun Summit had kept such a deadly trump card that enabled it to perish with its enemies, Li Feiyu could not conceal his doubts and started to repeatedly ask Han Li, hoping that his good friend might set his heart at ease.

"Regardless whether this is true or fake, the most important thing to us

right now is to quickly enter the main hall and meet with your young beloved and secretly slip away. You must be aware that regardless whether the information is authentic or not, staying here is too dangerous!” Han Li finally replied in a low voice.

“This is all true, but under the watchful eye of the crowd, how it is possible to go in secretly?” Li Feiyu asked, with a worried look on his face as he lowered his head.

“Sigh. We can only wait and see if any opportunities arise later on.” Han Li was also feeling quite helpless.

Just as the two of them hiding at the back of the crowd started to get agitated, the ground beneath their feet suddenly trembled. At first, it was just a slight tremor, but subsequently, it became quite violent. A lot of people were unable to stand and began to tumble one by one onto the ground. Following the summit’s trembling, there were also several mountain boulders that began to roll down.

“Not good! The mountain peak is about to collapse. That surnamed Wang wants to bring us down along with him!” Some reckless person within the group shouted in a panic.

When people heard this, the majority of them became even more panic-stricken. Some even disregarded previous Wang Juechu’s warning and frantically tried to escape towards the road’s intersection in an attempt to flee the mountain peak that they believed was about to collapse.

“Boom!” A rumble of explosions rang out as the surrounding area started to collapse. The ground also shook more intensely.

Hearing the loud noises, everyone thought that this was the start of the collapse of the mountain peak and couldn’t help but to give up all hope.

At this moment, Jia Tianlong was alarmed and furious. Even though he was escorted by the loyal Iron Guards, he was at a loss in his heart, unsure of what to do.

He couldn’t help but to look towards the Saint of Golden Light. Jia Tianlong smiled wily after he clearly saw the look of panic on the Saint

of Golden Light's face.

So this person was also unable to protect himself!

Jia Tianlong's initial admiration for this figure was immediately reduced.

"Hehe! And here I thought people from Feral Wolf Gang were all fearless heroes. Turns out you are all a mob!" At this moment, Wang Juechan suddenly ridiculed. Despite the confusion at the summit, Wang Juechan's words transmitted to everyone's ears, clearly caused by pure skill.

Following his words, the ground miraculously stopped trembling. It was as if the mountain peak had suppressed its anger in a split second, recovering its former tranquility.

At this moment, the crowd discovered that the small stone hall had disappeared without a trace, leaving behind an astonishingly large hole. A few courageous people took two paces forward and looked down from the edge. They couldn't help but gasp at the sight of the large, pitch-black hole. Since it was impossible to see the bottom of the hole, they knew that its depth was unfathomable.

"Commander Jia, can this evidence be considered proof of what I have to say?" Wang Juechan coldly asked.

Jia Tianlong's face paled slightly. He did not reply immediately; instead, he surveyed his surroundings...

Only to see that everyone beside him had panicked and uncertain looks on their faces. In addition to the ordinary gang members and other gangs' members, even the Iron guards by his side had unsightly looks.

Looking back, Jia Tianlong understood that he would be unable to accomplish his goal of completely annihilating Seven Mysterious Sect within a single night. It seemed that he needed to retreat first and consider the matter carefully once more before making a decision.

"Whatever conditions you have, you can state them, but you should be well aware of the situation. Even though it's like this, we are both tied, so

don't go overboard!" he exclaimed, not willing to accept the current outcome. As he turned his head around, there was a slight hint of extreme fury within his words.

Chapter 85: Bloody Battle, Death Contract

"I only have two conditions, and they are simple," Wang Juechu expressionlessly said.

"First, your men have to evacuate outside of my sect's sphere of influence, and they have to do so in groups under the supervision of my sect's disciples." His tone hardened considerably.

"Sure, that's not a problem." Jia Tianlong replied without hesitation.

Seeing how his opponent answered so steadfastly, Wang Juechu coldly laughed as he directly told Jia Tianlong his second condition.

"Second, both you and I have to sign a death contract and fight in a duel before you all can leave."

"Death contract!"

"Are you serious?"

"Has he gone mad!"

.....

As Wang Juechu's sentence left his mouth, it caused a huge ruckus to break out among the crowd. All those who heard the sentence had varied expressions on their faces. Some were excited, some were ashen, while some were eager to see the outcome of the duel.

After hearing Sect Leader Wang's conditions, Jia Tianlong's expression flickered before swiftly reverting back to its normal state.

"Did I hear that condition incorrectly? Both of us sign a death contract and fight until there is only one survivor?" After his seemingly nonchalant question, Jia Tianlong broke out into a laugh.

"No, your ears are fine. This is to collect the blood debt for Vice Sect Leader Wu and the others who died. Thus, I have no choice but to propose this: a death contract between you and me," Wang Juechu stated coldly, staring directly at Jia Tianlong with his hand on his sword.

Jia Tianlong laughed but did not give an immediate reply. His eyes

flashed while he pondered. It appeared that he did not dare to treat this lightly and would only answer after deep contemplation.

Voices broke out in discussion among the crowd. Even the oblivious Han Li couldn't take it anymore and chose to question Li Feiyu, who was standing by his side, instead.

"What is a death contract? Seems like it's something incredible!"

"What? You don't even know about death contracts? This is too inconceivable! Of all the ways to settle the disputes of Jiang Hu, this is, by far, the most famous and bloody method!" Stunned with amazement, Li Feiyu explained with a facial expression akin to the fascination of meeting a ghost.

"You don't say! You should know that I barely know anything beyond God Hand Valley and have no interest regarding matters of Jiang Hu. Is it really so strange that I did not know?" Han Li replied in a low tone, seemingly in a bad mood.

"Oh! Right, true enough, I almost forgot." Li Feiyu scratched his head in embarrassment.

"The death contract is often used by two parties who have great hatred and enmity towards each other. Before their battle, they would sign a life-death statement, stating that after they enter the battle, they would battle until there would only be a single survivor. If someone left halfway, not only would that person's reputation plummet and face everyone's disdain, anyone in the entirety of Jiang Hu would have the right to kill him. Because all the people of Jiang Hu believe that death contracts are extremely sacred, those who destroy or taint the essence of this contract will be annihilated as a warning to others."

"What's more is that most of these battle are staged in arenas where people have often fought to death, consequently appearing even more bloody and cruel than normal. In recent years, the number of people using this method to resolve their disputes has lessened."

Li Feiyu slowly and elaborately explained.

After hearing the explanation, Han Li furrowed his brows as he understood the true meaning of death contracts. He seemed to disapprove of Sect Leader Wang's decision to enter into a death contract with Jia Tianlong. From his perspective, this would only end with one dead and one grievously injured. In the first place, if there was to be such an ending, it might as well not be started at all. Sect Leader Wang might as well just let the enemy go free or just kill the enemy straight away, saving himself from all this unnecessary trouble.

"Fine, I agree. Let's enter into a death contract." After repeatedly deliberating, Jia Tianlong's gaze roaming about before riveting on the figure of Saint of Golden Light. Then, he made his final decision.

Since Jia Tianlong's opponent wanted to use this as an excuse to kill him, wasn't this a good opportunity for him to remove the roots of the troublesome Seven Mysteries Sect?

Jia Tianlong was very clear about what Wang Juechu was thinking. He obviously wanted the support of his three hidden martial uncles! But what a pity, he had already knew of their existences through reports from his spies and had already prepared countermeasures against them.

With the immortal cultivator and his flying swords techniques by his side, his chances of winning the battle was definitely more than ninety percent.

As long as he killed Wang Juechu as well as the remaining experts of the Seven Mysteries Sect during the deathmatch, it would be worth it. Even if his attack failed this time around, there was no cause for concern, because the next time he attacked, the Seven Mysteries Sect would no longer have any strength to resist. After all, nurturing an expert was not something that could be done within a single year.

Thus, this was the reason why the cautious Jia Tianlong would now chose to take such a risk and agree to sign the death contract.

"Sect Leader Wang! According to rules of the death contract, you should be the one to select the time and location of the battle. I will have no objections, but as for the number of fighters and methods of battle, I

should be the one to decide, am I right?" An enigmatic smile spread on Jia Tianlong's face.

"Hmmp! You are right," Wang Juechu answered somewhat unwillingly.

"Okay, then. I want the number of people fighting to be a hundred; fifty men from each party in a battle royal." With no signs of being courteous, Jia Tianlong directly stated his request.

"Fifty people? Battle royal?" Sect Leader Wang's cold face actually revealed a hint of surprise.

Death contract battles allowed multiple people to take part to prevent one side's strength to be greatly depleted. However, twenty or thirty people was already considered excessive, and Jia Tianlong's proposed method of battle—battle royal—was rarely used in comparison to one-on-one battles.

However, since it was Wang Juechu himself who requested the death contract battle, there was no way he could take back his words. Moreover, he was extremely confident in the battle prowess of his three senior martial uncles. Even if it was a battle royal, victory would most assuredly belong to his side.

Moreover, as long as he was able to kill Jia Tianlong, it would be worth it no matter how great a price he had to pay. As long as this scheming Jia Tianlong died, he was sure that the forces under him would almost immediately try to fight to be the next gang leader, resulting in the gang splintering into different groups as they vied for power and authority. This would no longer make them a threat to Wang Juechu's Seven Mysteries Sect.

As he thought of this, Sect Leader Wang nodded his head, agreeing to his opponent's request.

"Men, go prepare the arena and the death contract!" Wang Juechu commanded in a stern voice to the people standing behind him.

Chapter 86: A Sudden Change

Following his orders, thirty brightly-dressed disciples rushed from the sect hall.

None of these people uttered even a single word. In front of the hall, they wordlessly used wooden stakes and ropes to create the arena for the death fight. From their swift movements, it was evident that these people were proficient in martial arts, unlike the common low-ranking disciples of the Seven Mysteries Sect

Witnessing the site of the duel being created, Li Feiyu asked Han Li in distraught, "Don't tell me that we're going to hide here the whole time. Are we going to do nothing and idly watch their duel? This isn't right!"

"This isn't right? Your young lover is currently not in danger and is actually quite safe. We'll wait for the duel to finish. Once the Feral Wolf Gang evacuates, we'll take advantage of the disorder and stealthily make our way to Young Lady Zhang. Since the survivors of the Seven Mysteries Sect will most likely want to use you as a scapegoat and place all the blame on you, the two of you have to escape to a faraway place where they can't find you," Han Li said indifferently. It seemed that he didn't have a deep sense of belonging towards the Seven Mysteries Sect.

"Wouldn't that be eloping? That won't do; Xiuer wouldn't agree to it!" Li Feiyu shook his head as if he were beating a drum with it.

"Then knock her out and take her away by force. By the time she wakes up, it would be too late to change anything. Isn't that good enough?" Han Li replied nonchalantly.

"You...." Li Feiyu angrily glared at Han Li, unable to speak another word.

While these two individuals were completely engaged in a conversation with each other, Sect Leader Wang solemnly received two blood-red scrolls. These were the death contracts. He took one for himself and ordered someone to bring the other to Jia Tianlong, who was across from him.

As Jia Tianlong accepted the document, his expression changed to one of solemnness. He carefully opened the document and cautiously skimmed through it. Once he verified that there was no problem, he nodded his head and closed the document. He then began selecting soldiers to fight in the deathmatch.

After filtering through his available men, he selected thirteen elite experts from the Feral Wolf Gang. In addition, he selected tens of martial artists with acceptable talents from the smaller gangs in order to lessen his own losses. In any case, once they signed their names on the death contract, these martial artists would have to fight with all their might in order to preserve their insignificant lives, regardless of whether or not they were willing. As for the remaining candidates, Jia Tianlong picked some of his capable Iron Guards. Of course, the Saint of Golden Light was certain to take the stage. Jia Tianlong was completely counting on the great martial prowess of this Immortal cultivator's flying sword technique.

While Jia Tianlong was busy, he did not notice that Wang Juechu had returned to the stone hall. Until now, Jia Tianlong still hadn't seen Sect Leader Wang return, making Jia Tianlong think that Wang Juechu was probably having difficulty deciding the candidates for the deathmatch.

When the deathmatch stage had been thoroughly completed, Sect Leader Wang brought out three to four hundred people out from the hall.

Within this crowd was a mixture of young and old disciples of both genders. However, each and every one of them had a spirited light in their eyes and walked with steady steps. It was evident they were the Seven Mysteries Sect's elites. The ones Jia Tianlong was most cautious of were the three figures following behind Wang Juechu.

The first individual wore a fluttering scholar's jacket, and his face appeared intellectual and scholarly-like. The second was tall and sturdy with his chest bare. His full beard, resembling steel needles, gave him a valiant appearance that was incomparable. Last was a person wearing gray clothes. He carried a long sword on his back and had a cold expression.

At first glance, these people seemed to be middle-aged men, thirty to forty years old. However, close examination revealed that they released an aura that exuded the passage of time, an aura equivalent to that of an elderly man of seventy to eighty years. It made onlookers feel like the ages of these middle-aged men did not match their young external appearances.

(TL: “passage of time”: 沧海桑田 literally means the blue sea turned into mulberry fields. Figuratively, it represents the worldly passage of time or how time brings a great change to the world.)

Jia Tianlong’s mind was clear. These three were definitely Wang Juechu’s three martial uncles. It seemed that the Seven Mysteries Sect would not hold anything back, even going as far as summoning its reserves.

Thinking of this, Jia Tianlong leaned to the side and pointed his finger at those three martial uncles for the dwarf Saint of Golden Light. He asked, “Saint. I don’t know how you feel about those three, but can you take them down?”

“They are nothing more than ordinary folk. With a wave of my flying swords, their small lives will be finished. What is there to be worried about? Do you not trust me?” The Saint of Golden Light said this with a somewhat dismissive tone and gave Jia Tianlong a dissatisfied glare.

“I wouldn’t dare, I wouldn’t dare! I merely asked without thinking. Please do not take it to heart, Saint.” Jia Tianlong promptly responded with a smiling face, fearing that he might have offended the person on whom he was currently most relying.

“Humph! ” After the dwarf heard these words, his anger gradually vanished.

Only after seeing this did Jia Tianlong’s heart calm down. This great Immortal cultivator was truly not easy to please!

He bitterly smiled to himself and hastily turned his body before shouting loudly, “Are you not ready? Begin signing the death contract!”

Following this berating voice, those from the Feral Wolf Gang that were participating the deathmatch started to solemnly write down their names on the death contract. After they signed their names, their fighting spirit burst forth.

Not to be outdone, Wang Juechu commanded with a cold voice, “Sign the death contract!”

Immediately, tens of warriors who had been chosen to participate emerged from the crowd of Seven Mysteries Sect members and walked forward to sign the death contract.

Han Li’s gaze naturally fell on those who marched out as he tried to see if there were any acquaintances among them. He also saw Sect Leader Wang’s three martial uncles. However, he didn’t take them to mind. He skimmed the crowd with a hurried glance until an elderly man with a blue-green jacket entered his line of sight.

With a single look at this old man’s appearance, Han Li could not help but exhale in a low voice, “Elder Li!”

This man whose life Han Li had actually saved before, Ma Rong’s Master—Elder Li. He was unexpectedly a participant of the deathmatch. This was far beyond Han Li’s expectations.

Han Li retracted his gaze and hastily turned his face. Slapping Li Feiyu’s shoulder with all his strength, he said, “Did you see that? Elder Li is there, and wants to sign the death contract!”

Li Feiyu expressionlessly stood there, motionless, as he surveyed the distance from an elevated view. As if he hadn’t heard his friend, Li Feiyu had an extremely stupefied expression.

“Hey! What’s the matter?” Han Li was somewhat surprised.

“Even if Elder Li wants to sign the death contract, it’s not like he’s going to die, right?” He strangely asked.

Once Li Feiyu heard those words, his vision finally returned. He blankly gazed at Han Li and uttered a sentence that instantly stunned Han Li.

“Xiuer.... Xiuer, she is also there. She also wants to participates in the death contract battle!”

Upon uttering these words, Li Feiyu face instantly became extremely unsightly.

Chapter 87: Prominent Skill

“Where?” Han Li hastily asked after he came to his senses.

“There!”

Following Li Feiyu’s gaze, Han Li finally found a pale-faced Zhang Xiuer within the corner of the crowd. At this moment, she was standing with two other girls who were also participating in the deathmatch. Wearing thin white clothing, she slightly bit her almond lips, making her whole figure seem like a white colored flower, lovely and fragile.

“How could weak women like Lady Zhang participate in such a bloody battle? Did that one surnamed Wang make a mistake?” Han Li, who was still unwilling to believe his eyes, questioned incredulously.

“Xiuer is also an inner disciple of the Seven Supreme Division, did I not tell you before?” Li Feiyu replied, smiling bitterly as he said something that Han Li felt was unexpected.

Han Li remained silent and speechless.

It was clearly evident that the Seven Mysteries Sect’s remaining experts were few in number and that Sect Leader Wang did not have any protective feelings for the fairer sex. In order to prevail in this dire situation, he even sent out a girl like Zhang Xiuer, almost as if he was planning to stake everything on this one move.

“Brother, I’ll get straight to the point: I want to be with Zhang Xiuer. Take care of yourself!” Li Feiyu lightly said, placing his hand onto Han Li’s shoulder. He then turned his body and walked towards the arena.

He hadn’t even walked two steps before he heard a light sigh from behind him, followed closely by a fluctuation in the air. Instantly, another person appeared by his side: Han Li.

“What’s so big about this, isn’t it only a death contract battle? This small situation is not difficult for me to handle. Since we are friends, I can help you with this small matter.” Han Li said with a hint of a smile.

Having heard this, Li Feiyu did not say anything further and exerted his

strength to pat Han Li's chest, quietly saying, "Good brother! Thank you so much!"

Han Li kept a smile on his face, not saying another word. It was just as he said: the reason why he followed was partly because he knew Li Feiyu for quite a long time, so their relationship was quite close. As such, Han Li was unwilling to look on helplessly as Li Feiyu ventured off by himself. On the other hand, Han Li was a highly skilled and bold individual. He did not believe that the Feral Wolf Gang's so-called experts could pose much of a threat to him with his Fireball and Imperial Flight Technique. On top of things, he also was a bit eager to test his own strength.

The two men strode forward, squeezing through the crowd and heading straight for Wang Juechu's side. Halfway, the two ripped off their Broken Water Sect uniforms, revealing their Seven Mysteries Sect attires.

Han Li and Li Feiyu's sudden appearance and change in identity caused both sides to stare at them foolishly. No one tried to prevent their movements, allowing them to easily arrive in front of Wang Juechu.

"Division Head Li."

"Doctor Han."

Upon seeing Li Feiyu, Zhang Xiuer was pleased beyond expectation. Her coquettish face revealed her to be pleasantly surprised, and if the area wasn't filled with so many people, she might have thrown herself in her lover's embrace, pouring her heart out.

Sect Leader Wang also recognized the two individuals, his eyes revealing a trace of surprise. To him, their sudden appearance was very unexpected.

"External Blade Division's Division Head Deputy Li Feiyu pays his respects to the Sect Leader." Li Feiyu spoke loudly.

"The two of us wish to sign the death contract and join the deathmatch." He directly stated his request, not waiting for the others to question him about his appearance. Meanwhile, Han Li stood to the side without making a sound, maintaining an appearance similar to that of Li Feiyu and Sect Leader Ma.

Hearing Li Feiyu speak, Sect Leader Wang swallowed down the words he was originally obligated to ask. The cold look on his face revealed a hint of a smile as he warmly said:

“Very well! As expected of our Seven Mysteries Sect’s loyal disciples. With Division Head Li joining the battle, the sect will surely receive a better chance at victory. However, I think it would be better if Doctor Han does not join; after all, his medical expertise is very crucial to our sect. If something were to happen to him in the deathmatch, it would be a fatal loss.”

Hearing these words, Han Li gave a faint smile. Instead of waiting for Li Feiyu’s explanation, he shifted slightly, causing his his body to disappear right in front of Sect Leader Wang.

Sect Leader Wang was surprised, and just as he was about to look in all four sides, he heard Han Li’s lazy voice drift over from behind him.

“I don’t know if my own skill is worthy of Sect Leader Ma’s attention, but if I were to enter the deathmatch, I believe that I would be able to protect myself! Therefore, I hope that Sect Leader will accept my loyalty.”

Sect Leader Ma’s heart was overwhelmed with shock. He would have never thought that Han Li, who was renown in the sect for his medical expertise, would also possess such a terrifying martial skill. Unexpectedly, Han Li was able to soundlessly penetrate Wang Juechu’s defense and approach his back without attracting Wang Juechu’s attention.

“Such terrifying skill! Just who exactly is this person? Hidden within our sect, just what is his purpose?” A train of fearful ideas sprang forth in quick succession within Wang Juechu’s mind.

He turned his body and looked at the seemingly harmless Han Li. Sect Leader Wang couldn’t help but draw his gaze to his own three martial uncles...

Only to see that the three martial uncles’ facial expressions had also changed slightly. Their eyes revealed a hint of shock, making it evident that Doctor Han’s skill caused them to feel unrestrained fear.

A series of different thoughts rushed around in Sect Leader Wang's mind, but he finally made a decision.

He abruptly laughed loudly before cordially saying:

"Doctor Han's heart must have been wholly devoted to the sect. As the Sect Leader, how could I possibly refuse?"

He then used his finger to point at the two disciples whose skills were the weakest out of all of them. They stepped out of the line-up, allowing Han Li and Li Feiyu to take their places. Sect Leader Wang also allowed Han Li and Li Feiyu to use black ink to write their names in the blood-red death contract, permitting them to become members of the deathmatch.

The commotion within the Seven Mysteries Sect was naturally witnessed by Jia Tianlong, and even though he felt that the adding of two experts was a bit unexpected, he did not put it within his heart. After all, he believed that the fleshy body of mortals would be unable to stop the Saint of Golden Light's flying sword technique.

Therefore, both sides finished signing their respective death contracts and exchanging them, thus signaling the start of the deathmatch. Only one side would be able to leave alive.

Chapter 88: Golden Light Barrier

The Saint of Golden Light had a prideful expression on his face as he stood in the middle of the arena with the members of the Feral Wolf Gang standing behind him.

Before he emerged, he had already guaranteed Jia Tianlong that he alone would be sufficient to face all the challengers from the Seven Mysteries Sect. But of course, the price for his services would have to be adjusted accordingly from the previously agreed amount of 5,000 taels of gold to 8,000 taels of gold.

The moment when the Saint of Golden Light thought about the rewards he would be receiving after the battle, a fiery heat rose in his heart. He stared disdainfully at the crowd, straining himself to hold back from slaughtering all the members of the Seven Mysteries Sect.

Instead of being with Li Feiyu, Han Li stood at the other side of the crowd.

Since Li Feiyu and Zhang Xiuer were standing together, whispering sweet words of affection to each other, Han Li naturally would not be so rude as to intrude into the personal world of the two lovebirds.

“Seriously, what is he thinking about when he is with his young lover? To think that they could still talk about their emotions and love right now when we are about to fight for the sect’s survival!” Han Li felt a sour taste in his mouth.

After he came back to his senses, Han Li, like the rest of the sect members, stared curiously at the dwarf standing in the arena.

“The Feral Wolf Gang’s participants all hiding in the back. This is too incredible! They actually allowed such a dirty-looking dwarf to begin the fight? Could it be that the dwarf has some sort of strange and profound martial technique?” Han Li blinked his eyes as he pondered in his heart.

Sect Leader Wang’s thoughts flowed down the same path as Han Li’s. Instead of rashly allowing his sect members to swamp the arena, he

selected a Protector wielding a saber to test the waters. It seemed like he intended to scout out his opponent first before making a decision so that there wouldn't be any accidental casualties.

Although the battle format was supposed to be a battle royal, if one side only sent out a single man, it would unquestionably become a one-on-one fight. As Sect Leader Wang thought about this, he decided to act as such.

When the Saint of Golden Light saw only a single man approaching him, he roughly knew in his heart what his opponent was thinking.

"He he." The sound of a strange laughter emerged from his throat. His voice was capable of breaking apart drums, causing those who heard it to tremble uncontrollably.

The Protector that Wang Juechu sent out was a strong warrior more than thirty years old with an extremely valiant appearance. His hands, wielding the saber, were tightly clustered with visible green veins. One look was sufficient enough for one to know that he was extremely proficient with the saber. Even after hearing the Saint of Golden Light's strange laughter, his heart remained unshaken, which proved that he had experienced countless battles..

As the Saint of Golden Light saw the strong warrior approaching him, he stopped his weird laughter and nonchalantly took out a piece of yellow paper from inside his robes. The yellow paper was inscribed with words and patterns that glowed with a golden light, and Han Li could tell with a single glance that this item was extremely valuable.

The dwarf ignored the approaching warrior. Instead of moving forward, he held the yellow paper in one hand and started chanting an incantation.

Although the strong warrior from the Seven Mysteries Sect was unsure of what mad plot his opponent was hatching, his fighting experience was incomparably vast, and he understood that it would be best to finish off the dwarf before the dwarf completed the incantation, in case the battle became disadvantageous for him.

As a result, he didn't even pause to think before his body vigorously leapt into the air, drawing close to the body of the Saint of Golden Light

with a few steps. He raised the steel saber in his hand, and with a glint of cold light, he struck against the head of his opponent. The strike was swift, ferocious, and heavy, filled with all of his strength.

As soon as his eyes witnessed the edge of the saber landing on the Saint of Golden Light's head, the incantation had already been completed. Before the steel saber could come into contact with his body, the Saint of Golden Light held the piece of yellow paper against his body. Abruptly, a piercing ray of golden light flashed, emanating from the hand that held the yellow paper.

This extremely golden piercing ray of light blinded the strong warrior, but he did not have the slightest hint of panic, continuing to swing his steel saber downwards.

"Dang!" The sound of metal clashing resounded throughout the entire arena.

The strong warrior felt a wave of heat from web of skin between his thumb and index finger as the saber he was wielding almost flew out of his hands, causing him to be shocked. Although both his eyes had not managed to see clearly, he knew that the situation was perilous. He tiptoed as he backtracked a distance of several zhang before pausing. Brandishing his saber, he maintained his position.

At this moment, he could hear the crowd in the arena letting out gasps of shock and astonishment.

The strong warrior began to get worried after hearing the crowd's reaction. He desperately wanted to know what had happened and why was his clash with the dwarf so bizarre. Fortunately, his eyes had recovered his vision, and he hurriedly shifted his gaze forward...

Only to see the dwarf standing motionlessly several zhang ahead of him. His entire body seemed to emit an aura of golden light an inch wide around him. This golden light was akin to a thick armor, enveloping the dwarf and giving him a level of protection that was impervious to even the wind and rain. The Protector's saber attack had struck the barrier of the golden light and did not manage to even wound the dwarf's body. The

Protector did not understand the origin of the golden light that was as tough as steel and iron. It had actually made his saber attack ineffective.

Although the Protector had vast amounts of experience, this was the first time he had seen such an incredible thing, causing him to be stunned.

Wielding the steel saber, he was worried, not knowing whether he should advance or retreat.

Not only was the Protector stunned, the spectators in the crowd were astonished as well.

Within Jiang Hu, the number of individuals who knew Immortal cultivators were extremely sparse, especially within such a remote location like Yue County. As such, the golden light manifested by the yellow paper was extremely mysterious and unfathomable to the members of the Seven Mysteries Sect.

Jia Tianlong felt joy in his heart as he witnessed those from the Seven Mysteries Sect looking at each other with dismay. Standing at the back of the crowd was Han Li, who was even more astonished than the others.

Han Li knew that on this mountain peak, there was no one other than the dwarf who understood how to use magic techniques. It was obvious to him that the dwarf used an incantation similar to the that of Soul-Lock Seal. However, Han Li felt that this technique was even more powerful than the Soul-Lock Seal.

When no one was watching, Han Li quickly activated Heaven's Eye Technique by reciting its incantations. Having activated it, he hurriedly turned his gaze in the dwarf's direction.

He saw that beneath the golden aura, there was a flickering white light on the dwarf's body. When compared to the golden aura, this white light was too faint. If one was not looking for it, he or she would have most likely not been able to notice its existence.

This dwarf was actually an Immortal cultivator whose magic power was much lower than Han Li's. This caused Han Li to be delighted and

anguished at the same time.

He was delighted because, as a beginner, his magic power was richer when compared to the dwarf's, which signified that the dwarf had merely dabbled in Immortal cultivation. Han Li also felt anguished because he did not know whether or not the dwarf knew any other magic techniques of which he was not aware. As such, he was not sure if he would be able to handle the dwarf.

Chapter 89: Spear and Shield

Han Li turned his head to look at Sect Leader Wang, who had a gloomy countenance. In that moment, the three men standing near Sect Leader Wang had a great change in expression and started talking amongst themselves. It seemed that the dwarf's golden light was not something to be trifled with.

Covered by the golden light, the dwarf started laughing with his head facing the sky. Soon after, he domineeringly shouted, "This venerable master is standing here motionlessly and will allow you to attack as you please. If there is no one here capable of breaking this Saint's Gold Barrier, then not a single one of your insignificant lives will be spared." After this was said, he gave an arrogant sneer.

The Saint of Golden Light's speech had thoroughly changed the Seven Mysteries Sect disciples' apprehension into rage. Immediately, many valiant martial artists wanted to rush out from the crowd and charge straight toward the dwarf. However, Sect Leader Wang stopped them.

Wang Juechu waved his arm, signaling the Protectors at the scene to return. Then, he said a few words to the tall and sturdy man, who nodded his head and walked step by step toward to the dwarf, upright and unafraid.

As the dwarf saw the fully-bearded man walking toward him, a malicious gaze flashed in his eyes.

Because his natural body was deformed, he had been ridiculed since a young age. As a result, he especially detested bold individuals with tall and lofty figures. This man before him fell within his scope of resentment. He was already thinking of what cruel method he should use to torment him.

The bare-chested man was one of Wang Juechu's three martial uncles. If one did not see his full bearded face, they would have thought him to be an oaf. However, his true age had already passed a cycle of sixty years. He used to be known as a valiant and brave individual in the Seven

Mysteries Sect, killing countless enemies for the sake of the sect. Confronted with this strange golden barrier, he naturally would not act rashly.

This person examined the barrier and glanced at the Saint of Golden Light protected within. He cracked a smile, and with two extended fingers, he flicked the golden barrier, causing a clear “Dang” sound.

This frivolous act agitated the Saint of Golden Light. He sinisterly said, “Do you wish for this Immortal master to send you to an early reincarnation?!”

As the martial uncle listened to these words, his expression changed. He unexpectedly strode forward a single step, arriving at the dwarf’s side. Lifting his leg once more, he appeared behind the dwarf.

In order to get to the mind of the Saint of Golden Light, the martial uncle circled around him with long strides and increasingly faster revolutions. In a blink of an eye, his figure became indistinct; the Saint of Golden Light was incapable of seeing him clearly.

The Saint of Golden Light had become dizzy from the opponent’s continuous rotations, causing the fury in his heart to intensify. Without taking the time to think, he brought his hand to his the inside of his robe, seemingly with the intention to take something out.

Just then, the circling bearded man naturally took notice of his opponent’s actions.

He suddenly let out a long whistle that resembled a dragon’s cry and a tiger’s hiss. The whistle was both strong and lengthy. It shook the ears of everyone on Setting Sun Summit with a droning noise that also affected leaves and branches of the trees nearby.

After the Saint of Golden Light heard the whistle, his shaking hands were rendered powerless. His hand stretched toward his bosom, but unexpectedly, he did not withdraw it.

Suddenly, the sharp, loud sounds of bursting joints came from the bearded man. They grew more and more hurried until finally the sounds

were like the winds and rain of a torrential storm. The sounds had even covered the whistling.

The bearded man had circled to the front of the dwarf and stopped. He then stopped whistling and the sound of his joints bursting had stopped.

At this moment, those who were clear-headed discovered that the bearded man's body had changed dramatically since his revolutions. The muscles on his chest and arms were greatly bulging outwards and were pure black, as if cast in living iron. When compared to the dwarf, it was as if he were a giant.

While the Saint of Golden Light was gasping for air, he took out a thin long box from his bosom. This wooden box was completely dark and was covered by a paper talisman that sealed the contents.

Without waiting for the dwarf to tear off the paper talisman, the gigantic spirited man extended his huge hand like a palm leaf fan, and without politeness, he ruthlessly smashed against the golden light. The strike rocked the barrier, deforming it and causing the dwarf to sway incessantly, making the unstable dwarf incapable of tearing off the paper talisman.

The Saint of Golden Light's mind was overwhelmed with shock. He was fully aware of the might of the golden barrier surrounding him. This man was actually capable of striking and deforming it, which required a great amount of godly force. The contempt in his heart could not help but almost entirely vanish. His hands moved more quickly to tear off the paper talisman.

With the sound of tearing paper, the talisman had finally been ripped off.

The Saint of Golden Light's face showed an expression of joy. He then heard a "Thump" as the bearded man unleashed strikes against the golden barrier in quick succession. The dwarf's body swayed accordingly and was unable to remain standing, causing his buttocks to fall to the floor.

Only at this moment did he discover that the man had used both hands

and legs to assault the golden barrier like a squall. His current golden barrier was the same as kneaded dough. With the opponent's punches and kicks creating new dents, bulges, and warped deformations on the barrier, it seemed that the layer of golden light could break at any moment underneath the martial uncle's fierce assault.

Seeing this, the Saint of Golden Light's expression drastically changed. Flustered, he was no longer capable of maintaining the poise of an Immortal master, and instead proceeded to chant an incantation. Unfortunately, he had made many errors in this hurried attempt, so there wasn't the slightest result. That black box hadn't moved even a jolt.

In the back, Jia Tianlong saw everything and was somewhat amazed.

On one hand, he was amazed by the Saint of Golden Light's idiotic actions and obliviousness. On the other hand, he felt awe as he witnessed the martial prowess belonging to Wang Juechu's martial uncle, who could test the power of the golden barrier belonging to the Saint of Golden Light. The barrier could truly be considered impervious to sword and spear. Water and fire couldn't penetrate it either, similar to its ineffectiveness against a diamond-hard shield. Unexpectedly, this golden barrier was trembling greatly under this person's punches and kicks, and accumulated deformations according to the martial uncle's wishes.

This was truly inconceivable. This man's skill was a great and profound mystery!

He recalled that there still existed two more similar experts in addition to the bearded man. For the first time since he had rashly agreed to the opponent's deathmatch, Jia Tianlong felt slightly regretful. He now understood why the opposition had requested a deathmatch with complete confidence. Wang Juechu actually had these three freakish experts to rely on. If Jia Tianlong were in his shoes, he would have also requested a bloody battle.

Thinking of this, Jia Tian Long looked at the disadvantaged dwarf. He already considered whether or not he should send assistance to this self-proclaimed Immortal master to avoid having this expert die such a

muddle-headed death without even using his flying swords technique.

Chapter 90: Flying Sword?

From the situation in the arena, it seemed that the violent man held an absolute advantage. However, no one knew that this particular person, who seemed to be incomparably mighty, was actually secretly grumbling to himself.

Every fist he unleashed caused a portion of the barrier of golden light to cave in. The impacts fiercely vibrated the barrier; it would only be a matter of time before the barrier would be totally destroyed.

But no one knew that every time the man's fists had come into contact with the golden light, the man could feel a sharp wave of rebound energy that seemed to reciprocate the strength he used. Currently, all four of his limbs were grievously damaged. He knew that once his the effects of his skill faded, all of his limbs would probably be immensely swollen.

In addition, the barrier of golden light had an insane recovery rate. After a short while, the portions that he caved in with his attacks would immediately return back to their original shapes, as if the barrier was never damaged in the first place. Moreover, his previous attacks were aimed randomly at the barrier of golden light, merely causing its shape to be distorted, but other than that, there seemed to be no other effect on the barrier whatsoever.

The tall and sturdy man continued in this manner for a period of time, while the barrier of golden light vibrated intensely, as if it would break apart at any moment.

Now, the thoughts of everyone present went in the opposite direction. They understood that this tall and sturdy man's attacks were unable to destroy the golden barrier. His immense strength would at most be able to create some dents on the barrier, but it would not be able to completely destroy it.

So not only did Jia Tianlong abolish the idea of sending reinforcements, but the dwarf also regained his former composure.

But because he had embarrassed himself earlier, the Saint of Golden

Light's features seemed to have a trace of embarrassment, and as he stared at the strong and sturdy man, his gaze became increasingly malevolent. But because he was suffering the barrage of attacks from his opponent, his body was unable to stand straight, and every magic technique he intended to cast misfired. As such, he stopped his incantations and stared intently at his opponent while muttering a string of curses under his breath in an unknown language.

As for the tall and sturdy man, he did not feel any changes, so he continued frenziedly attacking the golden barrier. The spectators all thought that this individual had boundless energy and would never need to rest.

“Clang Clang Clatter!” Exerting his full strength, that ferocious man unleashed two strikes and a kick before turning his back in retreat. That massive frame of his did not seem to hinder his speed.

The man's actions caused the spectators to be shocked. A commotion arose shortly after.

The Saint of Golden Light was shocked as well, but he swiftly flew into a rage. He hurriedly sat down and crossed his legs. Placing a black box horizontally onto his lap, he began to mumble an incantation. Both his hands were extended in front of his chest in a strange position as he shivered forcefully, expending a seemingly tremendous amount of energy. Looking at the violent convulsions shaking the dwarf's body, everyone present thought it was as if all the fingers on his hands possessed the strength of a thousand jin.

(TL: 1 jin is equal to 0.5 kg or 1.102 lb)

At this moment, the tall and sturdy man had already left the area designated for the Seven Mysteries Sect, as if he wanted to retreat back to the crowd. However, he suddenly heard a loud voice from behind his back. “Rise.” He saw the face of Wang Juechu, who was standing in front of him, fall drastically as the the audience collectively shouted out, “Be careful!”

The tall and sturdy man trembled as he hurriedly dodged to the left and

cast a side glance at the dwarf...

Only to see a ray of grey light swiftly approaching his previous position, missing him by a narrow margin.

His heart froze, but he relaxed, since he had managed to dodge this hidden weapon attack. He would be reunited with his two senior martial uncles soon and could then take a breather

But before he had even completed this thought, he felt an extreme pain in his right arm. As he turned his gaze, another exclamation of shock could be heard from the audience. Within that cacophony of noise, the voices of his two senior martial uncles were heard, filled with immense worry and apprehension.

That man was slightly stunned, as if he did not understand what had happened. At this moment, he saw another ray of grey light appear in his line of sight, piercing through his chest. Looking at the shape of the weapon, it appeared to be the same hidden weapon that he had dodged earlier.

The man was shocked and angered. He wanted to open his mouth to say something, but as the sound “Pu tong” rang out, his body collapsed on the ground. It was only at this moment that the man realized that his right arm had already been broken without him being aware. Fresh blood flowed unceasingly from the wound.

“What happened?” The man asked, his stomach full of confusion and unwillingness. But soon after, his vision went black as his consciousness faded into oblivion.

Even until the point of death, he was not able to understand what had happened, but the members from both the Feral Wolf Gang and the Seven Mysteries Sect were able to see clearly what had happened.

From what they understood, after the Saint of Golden Light had finished his incantation and shouted “Rise”, a ray of grey light shot forth from the black box, spiraling around the head of the dwarf before following the direction that his finger was pointing in and flying towards that tall and sturdy man.

Although the man dodged out of reflex, avoiding the strike through his chest, he had no way to avoid the attack that was directed to the back of his arm. It seemed that the ray of grey light was incredibly sharp. Even after slicing his arm, the man still had no knowledge or realization that something had happened.

Afterwards, the crowd was even more astounded. After the ray of grey light was avoided, it continued following the finger movements of the dwarf, flying far ahead in front of the warrior and abruptly changed directions. It pierced straight through the chest of the defenseless man and easily robbed him of his life.

Everyone was stunned into silence by what had just occurred and instinctively fixed their gazes on the ray of grey light that had returned to the dwarf and was now spiraling above the dwarf's head.

The words "Flying sword" appeared involuntarily in the majority of the spectators' minds. Although these people did not know about the existence of Immortal cultivators, even they had heard of the various legends and miraculous stories of flying swords.

This ray of grey light was extremely similar to the rumored flying sword used by the legendary Immortals.

Could the unsightly dwarf be one of the fabled Sword Immortals? The majority of the crowd fixated their gazes, now filled with respect, at the dwarf. The title of "Sword Immortal" was enough to cause many mortals to be filled with fear.

The Saint of Golden Light now held his head high with his chest out, considering himself to be unparalleled in this world. He manipulated the ray of grey light to soar above his head in a wild dance until it resembled a huge grey python, causing exclamations of awe to come out from the Feral Wolf Gang. On the other hand, those representing the Seven Mysteries Sect were speechless and downcast. Imminent defeat was apparent in their hearts.

If one were to say that the morale of Jia Tianlong's men was greatly increased while that of the Seven Mysteries Sect was greatly diminished,

he or she would not be wrong. After all, Jia Tianlong had managed to enlist the aid of a Sword Immortal. Han Li was the only one in the crowd who felt extreme joy in his heart.

Han Li realized that this Saint of Golden Light's flying sword technique was exactly the same as the Telekinesis Technique that he himself had learned. Although he did not know if the ray of grey light was indeed a sword, he knew that Telekinesis Technique could only control tangible objects; this fact was undeniable.

Currently, Han Li's heart surged with the intent to fight. It seemed that his interest towards this fellow Immortal cultivator was growing increasingly high.

Chapter 91: Stealing Treasure

While that dwarf was immensely satisfied with himself, Han Li was scheming in his mind.

Two men quickly jumped out from the Seven Mysteries Sect's side. After they jumped from the crowd, without saying anything, they rushed straight toward the dwarf as quick as lightning. They were Wang Juechu's two remaining martial uncles.

These two men wore grieving expressions. It was obvious that the tall and sturdy man's death had greatly saddened them. As a result, they felt endless loathing for the Saint of Golden Light and paid no attention to his sword's transcendent movements. They were consumed by the thirst to kill the opponent and take revenge on behalf of their fallen comrade.

Sect Leader Wang had originally planned to block their reckless actions, but acknowledged that this dwarf, capable of mystic techniques, had to be confronted sooner or later. These two martial uncles were the only ones capable of threatening the dwarf. Rather than blocking them now, it would be better to take advantage of his martial uncles' desire for revenge and have them clash with the dwarf immediately.

Thinking of this, Wang Juechu swallowed the words that he was about to say to call them back.

The Saint of Golden Light had learned his lesson not long ago and did not dare to look down on these opponents. He propelled the grey light toward the two with one finger. The grey light immediately changed into a long beam of light and flew directly towards them.

The uncle who resembled a scholar immediately suspected that the flying sword's grey light would fly toward them. He raised an eyebrow and raised his hand, launching a thin silver line from his sleeve. It collided against the grey streak of light head-on, stopping it for a second. However, the grey streak of light then rushed forward, as if nothing had happened. It seemed that the silver line did not have much of an effect.

The others could not clearly discern the nature of the silver line, but

with the extreme eyesight bestowed upon him by the Eternal Spring Arts, Han Li was able to see it very clearly. It consisted of tens of silver needles fired off in succession in a straight line. However, he did not know what method the scholar had used. Such a powerful technique, capable of violently launching out many thin, feather-light needles, had greatly interested Han Li.

Seeing that the silver needles had no effect, the scholar did not panic and instead began revolving his body like a spinning top. Immediately after, his revolving silhouette ejected countless cold beams of light varying in size that split into two parts. One portion turned into a silver stream that directly struck the grey light, producing a sharp crackling sound as they hit each other. Unfortunately, it was unable to destroy the grey streak of light. The other portion flew straight towards the dwarf, colliding against the golden barrier. “Ding ding.” The impact itself was a spectacular sight.

The grey streak of light launched itself against the silver stream, causing an unending amount of debris fragments to fall. Because they were completely shattered, one could no longer make out their original appearance, but the objects that ricocheted off the golden barrier were intact, only taking minimal damage. These objects formed the silver stream and consisted of a few throwing knives, prayer beads, iron lotus seeds, metal coins, and a myriad of concealed weapons. There were even a few unfamiliar items that could not be named.

The Saint of Golden Light was slightly surprised. However, he immediately curled his lips and thought that these mundane, common metal weapons could not possibly fend off his treasure for long.

“TAI!” A huge shout like that of spring thunder resonated through the arena, shocking everyone present and leaving them in awe.

At this moment, everyone discovered that the grey-clothed man, who had originally rushed out alongside the scholar, had drawn the precious sword from his back at an unknown moment and was steadily walking toward the grey light. About two inches of light emanated from the tip of the sword that he was holding. The light continuously grew and shrank,

giving off a menacingly cold air.

“Sword Point!” It was unknown who had first shouted the name of this supreme sword skill that every swordsman would yearn for, even in their dreams.

Suddenly, there was an explosion! Passion flared both from inside and outside the stage!

If one were to say flying swords were but a rumor from legend, then Sword Point would be a legend of Jiang Hu that all swordmen would yearn for!

Currently, not only did Sword Point and flying swords appear in succession, but also their immediate confrontation. How could anyone not burn with anger at being unable to witness such a scene? This was a moment that could make life feel worthwhile!

At this moment, however, Jia Tianlong was not excited with the crowd. Instead, those around him felt a cold aura being released as he felt the flow of cold sweat. Only now did he understand what it felt like to be terrified in hindsight!

Although he previously knew the Seven Mysteries Sect was hiding three great experts, he did not anticipate that this expert would have a great enough skill that he would be able to use Sword Point. Had he not request this Saint of Golden Light to act, Jia Tianlong feared that this grey-clothed person, capable of using Sword Point, could kill each and every person on his side.

While Jia Tianlong’s frightened expression paled, the grey-clothed man had already arrived below the grey streak of light.

At this moment, it was unknown whether the scholar had exhausted his supply of hidden weapons or the scholar had deliberately stopped, but the scholar’s bodily rotation halted all of a sudden, breaking the silver stream that was pushing against the grey light. No longer facing any resistance, the grey light naturally fell towards the head of the grey-clothed man.

The grey-clothed man grasped his sword with both hands and fearlessly

leaped high into the air. He waved the point of his sword and ferociously struck the grey light.

A clear “Dāng” sound spread through the air. The grey-clothed man fell to the ground from midair and staggered back several steps. Soon after, he opened his mouth and spouted out a mouthful of blood, his expression becoming dispirited and listless. The first three inches of the longsword in his hand had disappeared and turned into a flat bulge.

The grey streak suffered through this strike like a shot bird and fell from the sky. Even after landing in the dust, the grey light’s brilliance did not wane. Instead it continued pulsing incessantly, appearing intact and completely vigorous.

Seeing this event, both crowds simultaneously cried out in surprise. However, the members of the Seven Mysteries Sect’s cries were brimming with joy, while Jian Tianlong’s side was brimming with worry.

The scholar was also elated, but he hesitated for a moment as he looked at the winded grey-clothed man and the eyes of the dwarf. Nevertheless, his body flew towards the dwarf, preparing to dispatch the enemy.

Without waiting for the scholar to fly out even a few steps, the grey-clothed man suddenly yelled from behind, “Quick, dodge!”

The scholar’s mind was startled, but he immediately began to move. However, he felt a cool sensation from his neck and saw the grey light fly past him. He witnessed a headless body run forward a few steps that soon fell to the floor. The back of that body seemed exceedingly familiar. As the scholar thought of this, his consciousness quickly faded.

The Saint of Golden Light was completely arrogant at this moment. He once again commanded the grey light on the ground to suddenly rise and fly towards the grey-clothed man, the sole survivor of the three experts. He was immensely proud of the small scheme he used to get rid of the scholar.

Just as he planned to immediately kill what was left of the Seven Mysteries Sect after killing this grey-clothed man, he suddenly heard a sentence from a figure within the crowd. “This thing of yours flying

about, I've grown fond of it. How about you give it to me and let me play with it?" Just as he heard this, he felt a formidable spiritual power approach his grey light and forcibly sever his connection with it, snatching it away from his control.

The grey light that was originally flying toward the grey-clothed man turned in midair and flew into the crowd.

Wherever the gray light went, people lost their heads in fear and were dodging it all over the place. Only a common-looking youth of only seventeen to eighteen years stood unmoving from his original spot. This youth smiled toward the Saint of Golden Light for a moment, exposing his pure white teeth that contrasted against his tan skin. He then pointed to the grey light, which obediently fell into his hand.

"An Immortal cultivator!" The dwarf's heart trembled and his complexion fell, becoming pale beyond comparison.

Chapter 92: Sword Talisman

Everyone who had seen this young man's actions all thought that their eyes must have failed them.

Originally, when they saw the grey light turn and fly towards the crowd from the Seven Mysteries Sect, they believed the midget had changed his mind, intending to first kill off the rest of the humble martial art disciples and then handle the grey-clothed person.

Who would have imagined that the grey streak would fly into the crowd and actually land on the hand of a seemingly ordinary disciple, who effortlessly received it. This was far too much to believe!

The Seven Mysteries Sect's side, including Sect Leader Wang and the grey-clothed man, felt both pleasantly surprised and relieved from the unexpected rescue.

Wang Juechu was in ecstasy and was even more glad that he had the foresight to agree to let Han Li participate in the deathmatch. He knew that the survival of the participants in the deathmatch, as well as the survival of the Seven Mysteries Sect, would henceforth depend entirely on this profoundly mysterious Doctor Han Li.

Li Feiyu had understood what Han Li had stolen. At this moment, his mouth had dropped open and did not close for a while. Although he knew his close friend was somewhat outstanding, to be able to take away the Immortal cultivator's flying sword was a feat Li Feiyu could only dream of, making him absolutely giddy.

This actually went as far as to make Zhang Xiuer, Elder Li, and the opposing Jia Tianlong wide-eyed and speechless. Each of their facial expressions was very wonderful to behold.

Numerous gazes were shot out, included fear, doubt, and pleasant surprise, but all of them fell onto Han Li. Han Li had an smooth expression and was smiling all along. It seemed that he did not have even the slightest care for the spectators' attentive gazes.

However, no one knew that behind that calm appearance, his mind was filled with endless depression.

Only the Heavens knew that Han Li absolutely did not want to take action! His original plan was to wait for the dwarf to negligently drop his golden barrier and then mount a sneak attack. Until then, he would conceal himself in the rear and use very small fireballs to easily kill the opposition.

But who would have thought that the plan of the Heavens would supercede that of men? Han Li, from simply seeing the grey streak fly about, had stirred an uncomfortable irritation and unconsciously used a technique he had learned earlier through endless practice: "Telekinesis Technique". The result was an easy seizure of the object.

Such a simple seizure was greatly unexpected. Han Li simply extended his magic power towards the grey streak and easily erased the dwarf's spiritual power, establishing a connection between him and the grey light.

On one hand, Han Li had effortlessly seized control of the opponent's treasure and was secretly delighted. On the other hand, he now had no choice but to confront the dwarf, making him somewhat uneasy.

He clearly understood he did not possess enough force to break the the opponent's tortoise shell. The only thing giving him comfort was that his magic power had exceeded his opponents several times over.

Of course, the slightest sign of unease could not be seen in Han Li's expression. That was because he was fully aware that if one held the psychological high ground, then they would possess a great advantage in a true confrontation and would somewhat increase the odds of success out of thin air. This was a trick he had learned from within the Blinking Sword Art manuals.

As a result, after recognizing the dwarf as a great enemy, Han Li showed the opposite and instead showed an expression of having a card up his sleeve.

He leisurely moved the treasure he had just taken back and forth in his

hands. The grey streak remained spirited, and its length was indeterminate, its true form still unclear.

Han Li raised his head to take a glance at the somewhat pale dwarf and slightly smiled. He lightly rubbed the grey streak in between his hands. The grey streak's brilliance was immediately exhausted, revealing its true appearance. It was actually a Daoist paper talisman. In addition, a picture of a small grey sword was drawn on this peculiar talisman.

The small grey sword on the paper talisman was drawn vividly and lifelike, as if it were real. In addition, there was no magic power urging the small sword to move, yet it emitted a faint flowing light on its own, as if it were an exceptionally sharp sword. Its cold aura was menacing.

However, he had second thoughts regarding this Daoist talisman. Recalling the previous great display of its outstanding mysterious power, he felt somewhat satisfied. After all, its ferociousness was seen with his own eyes; he was certain it will be quite useful later on.

Han Li easily pocketed the talisman in his bosom. He didn't dare to swaggeringly use this item in front of its previous owner. Who knows what tricks the opponent could do with the talisman? In addition, he was quite unfamiliar with the Telekinesis Technique, having never practiced it on a suitable object. He supposed that if he were to use this object now, it would be very difficult to injure his opponent with it.

Across from him, the Saint of Golden Light stared helplessly as Han Li pocketed the treasure he had taken from him. He could not help but become furious, but he did not have the courage to step forward and tear it away from him. It should be known that since the opponent was able to easily erase his spiritual power from the talisman, his opponent's magic power should be several times deeper than his own. He truly did not have the courage to contest against him.

Han Li saw that the dwarf was strained. The Saint of Golden Light was clearly angry but did not dare to speak, knowing that he was already subdued by his opponent. Not knowing who was superior, Han Li's nerves couldn't help but want to settle this matter even more.

Finally, deciding to be a fox masquerading as a tiger, Han Li exerted the Imperial Flight Technique on his body; his figure flashed several times until he arrived in front of the dwarf.

Seeing Han Li move in the way that gods appeared and demons vanished, the Saint of Golden Light grew even more fearful. He could not help but recoil several steps, timidly saying in a soft voice, "What are you going to do? I'm not conquering this region's resources, nor did I take any spiritual herbs or Immortal elixirs. I only received a few of these mortals' gold, nothing more. Furthermore, I didn't violate your local clan's interests. You have no reason to kill me."

Hearing these words, Han Li was secretly delighted. He knew the opponent had mistaken him as a representative of some Immortal cultivation clan. His confidence suddenly rose a bit. He deliberately gave a faint smile, and soon after, he feigned a mysterious identity and softly asked, "I don't know who Your Excellency is. Why have you taken the initiative to participate in mortal affairs and disturb the local order of the secular realm? This puts my clan in a difficult position!"

Hearing the opponent's mind town and thinking that Han Li lacked the intention to dispose of him, the dwarf immediately roused his spirit. His two small eyeballs spun around in several circles and he hastily said in an evasive manner, "I am a disciple of Qin Yeling from the Ye Clan. I was simply passing by. Because I was an old friend of the Feral Wolf Gang's Commander, I couldn't resist their plea and decided to help them out. By no means did I have any intention of deliberately offending your clan. Brother, I hope you'll forgive me. What is the name of your noble clan? In the future, this humble man will certainly visit your clan to apologize for this offense."

Chapter 93: Raging Flames Burning the Enemy

After revealing the fact that he was someone from the Ye Clan, the dwarf involuntarily puffed out his chest. As if he could draw support from the words he just spoke, the tone of his voice also got more bold. It seemed like he was extremely confident about the fame associated with the name “Qin Yeling from the Ye Clan”.

Seeing how courageous the dwarf became all of a sudden, Han Li knew that the Ye Clan had to be a famous Immortal clan.

However, even though the dwarf had such an impressive backing, he had still panicked during the start of the fight and made mistakes that clearly showed that he did not lie. He was just a nobody within the Immortal clan. His life or death held no significance to the clan, which would not stir even if he perished.

Han Li made his judgement within a few short moments. In his heart, he had already decided to finish off his opponent, since he knew that there wouldn't be any future repercussions.

This deduction destroyed the last thread of sympathy within Han Li, whose heart began to surge increasingly with a strong murderous intent.

After all, his opponent's magic power could not be compared to Han Li's. Even the dwarf's movements and actions were that of an idiot, despite the dwarf being an Immortal cultivator. However, how rare was it to find a Immortal cultivator here! Even if there were no conditions of a deathmatch, Han Li would not give up this chance and reject this big gift. In addition, Han Li could easily deduce that the dwarf was not a kind-hearted being based on his mannerisms and speech. Thus, when Han Li moved into action, he did not have the slightest hesitation.

“Qin Yeling...Ye Clan...could it be he's from that famous clan?” Surprise appeared on Han Li's face as if he did not believe the dwarf's words.

Since his opponent dare to use this name to intimidate him, Han Li

silently guessed that this clan should be quite famous among Immortal cultivators.

“It’s exactly that Ye Clan. Brother, you’ve actually heard of the Ye Clan, so I believe you won’t purposely make things difficult for me.” Seeing how the great name of the Ye Clan affected Han Li, the dwarf started to boast and speak in a loud voice.

“Ye Clan?.....” Han Li pretended to hesitate, as he scratched his head, displaying an expression of contemplation.

Upon seeing this situation, joy bloomed in that dwarf’s heart. He immediately rushed to the side and frenziedly hit the drum, creating a cacophony of noise. He was extremely afraid that the situation would turn out disadvantageous for him if this dragged on.

“How about this: I will bring you to see one of the clan’s elders and we’ll let the upper management decide how we should deal with this. How about it, brother?” Han Li replied as if he was being put into a difficult position.

“No need for such troubles! This is just a small matter. If you want the elders to get involved in such a small affair, I’m afraid it would leave a bad impression in the eyes of the elder and would be greatly detrimental to your future progress!” The moment the dwarf heard Han Li’s reply, he couldn’t help but jump in shock. He hurriedly put on a caring face, trying to dissuade Han Li.

The Saint of Golden Light saw Han Li as an inexperienced young Immortal cultivator who was travelling to gain worldly experience. He thought that Han Li had always been trapped inside his clan and made to cultivate. The only possible explanation for Han Li’s youthful age and his profound magic power was that he had only recently come out to the secular world.

“Thank you, brother, for your reminder!” Han Li appeared very touched, lowering his head as he pondered. Extending his arms, he took out the talisman with the picture of a small sword etched over it.

“This is the first time I met you, but brother has already shown such

great care for me. I think I shall return this treasure to you, its original owner!” Deceptively, Han Li spoke in a sincere tone, although there were some lingering traces of unwillingness in his expression.

The dwarf was extremely happy. To think that the Immortal cultivator in front of him was so naive that he would want to return the treasure that the dwarf had just lost.

Afraid that any hesitation would cause Han Li to change his mind, the dwarf stopped thinking further about it and hurriedly decided. As he waved his hands, the golden barrier around him dissolved completely. He extended his hand to get back his talisman and rudely said, “Since brother is so sincere, I will no longer be polite!”

Seeing that the dwarf had extended his hands in an attempt to grab the talisman, Han Li’s expression abruptly underwent a huge change. He pointed to the back of the dwarf and excitedly called out, “Clan Leader! Why has this esteemed elder arrived at this place?!”

Upon hearing this, the dwarf froze, so frightened that he no longer cared about the treasure. He turned his head around, but there was no one there, only silence.

“Oh sh*t!” No matter how stupid the dwarf was, he knew that he had fallen for Han Li’s trap. Hurriedly turning back his head, he could only feel a hot sensation near his chest. Soon after, flames started rising up his body, covering him in a sea of flames. In the blink of an eye, the dwarf was incinerated into ashes.

After this moment, Han Li let out a long sigh and retracted the hand that he had used to shoot out the fireball earlier. Using the small “Fireball Technique” and killing his opponent with a single move, the whole process seemed extremely simple, but he had actually expended a great deal of effort under a lot of pressure in order to come up with this plan. Now that his sneak attack had succeeded, a joyful smile broke out on his face, and he praised himself silently.

Jia Tianlong and Wang Juechu had clearly seen what happened just now, but they did not understand what they saw. Because neither Han Li

nor the dwarf was willing to let others listen in to their conversation, they had spoken in extremely low tones. The spectators were too far away and thus were unable to hear their voices.

They only knew that upon seeing Han Li, the dwarf got extremely afraid, but after exchanging a few sentences, the dwarf appeared to be sincerely begging Han Li for something. During the final moments, they saw that when the dwarf's back was turned, Han Li had abruptly unleashed a fireball and incinerated the Feral Wolf Gang's backer, easily disintegrating him into a layer of white dust.

Jia Tianlong felt a bitter taste in his mouth, so bitter than it seeped deep into his heart. How could this have happened? Originally, the outcome was in their favor, but why did it end up like this? After this unremarkable disciple of the Seven Mysteries Sect appeared, everything was suddenly turned upside down. Even the Saint of Golden Light, an Immortal cultivator, was burned to a state where he couldn't be any more than dead.

On the other hand, Wang Juechu's emotions were naturally opposite from that of his great enemy. He tightly gripped to the hilt of his long sword that was placed on his waist, and was looking over with an excited expression. Squatting in an ungraceful posture, he looked at Han Li, who easily swept away the dwarf, while showing a fervent expression on his face.

The current Han Li was very excited. However, this was not just excitement from winning against the dwarf. From the Saint of Golden Light's ashes, he discovered a few items that had not been burned into ashes.

There weren't many items—only a talisman, a command medallion and a book.

The talisman was the one that the dwarf had used to erect the golden barrier. Although Han Li did not know the incantation, it was still sufficient enough to drive him wild with joy. Currently, the thing that he needed most of all was a protective measure that could be used to save

his life.

The command medallion was a black, triangular shape object. On one side, there were golden words carved upon it, “Ascending to become an Immortal”, while on the other side, the word “Command” was engraved in silver. The entire command medallion didn’t seem to be made from metal, but it was heavy and solid to the touch. Han Li had no idea what it could be used for.

And as for that book, Han Li knew that this had to be some extraordinary object, given the fact that it wasn’t burned into a crisp after he unleashed his Fireball Technique. But after flipping through a few pages, he realised that this book was actually a genealogical record of some sort, a record of those that were surnamed Qin. Han Li did not know what this had to do with the Saint of Golden Light, nor why it was so important that the dwarf carried it in his possession.

“This dwarf said that he was a disciple from the Ye Clan, but he brought along a genealogical record of those who were surnamed Qin. Could he be a bastard child of the Ye Clan?” Greatly disappointed, Han Li made a few malicious guesses.

Chapter 94: Complete Victory

Although he had obtained these three items, he was not capable of immediately using any of them. However, Han Li still collected them without a trace of politeness.

Han Li then stood up and brushed off the dust on his body. Using a smile that wasn't truly a smile, he looked toward Jia Tianlong and the rest of the Feral Wolf Gang.

"Do you intend to break your own meridians or would you rather have me personally send you off?" Han Li's tone was very polite, but the meaning of his words did not give the Feral Wolf Gang the slightest amount of leeway.

Hearing these words, Jia Tianlong felt an extraordinary cold feeling permeating through his body and freezing his entire face.

He constantly warned himself to remain calm and that there would be a method to deal with this man. However, he could not help but wipe his forehead that was covered by a layer of cold sweat. Jia Tianlong forced a bitter smile, knowing that he didn't need a mirror to know that his current complexion was, without a doubt, extremely unsightly.

With great effort, he turned his head around to look at everyone from the Feral Wolf Gang, only to find that the complexions of his men were also pale. All of them were frightened and wore expressions that foretold the imminent arrival of a great catastrophe. These people were at a loss, not knowing what to do. The slightest will to fight could not be seen in their panic-stricken eyes.

Jia Tianlong was dispirited. Facing the Seven Mysteries Sect, he looked at his archenemy, Wang Juechu, who was coldly gazing back with a look that could kill. For the most part, the rest of the crowd had hateful expressions and a thirst for revenge.

Jia Tianlong was at a loss. As he unconsciously looked outside of the deathmatch arena, his gaze fell upon his originally loyal and devout subordinates. The previous feelings that they had had and what their

expressions currently expressed had nothing in common with each other. There were some who were anxious and others who were aloof, but the majority of them had unexpectedly cheerful expressions. They were all whispering in each other's ears, evidently feeling pleasure from Jia Tianlong's misfortune.

"This will not do! We, ourselves, will decide whether or not we will die here! We will survive and continue to complete our hegemony!" It was unknown whose expression it was that touched Jia Tianlong's nerve, but frenzy suddenly flashed through his eyes.

"Men, come! Iron Guards, advance and prepare your crossbows! The rest of you, wait for your orders!" All of a sudden, Jia Tianlong loudly bellowed with a great amount of inner strength.

Jia Tianlong was worthy of being a commander. Even though the men participating in the deathmatch were previously at their wits' end, his roar that contained inner strength roused all their spirits, making the men seem as if they had just woken from a dream. Regardless of whether they were from the Feral Wolf Gang or just experts of a small faction, they all had a pillar of support. One after another, they wiped their fists and rubbed their palms, adopting a determination to fight to the death.

Han Li slightly wrinkled his eyebrow and gave a light snort. With his hands behind his back, he slowly walked towards Jia Tianlong.

"It seems like I still have to waste a few more movements!" Han Li thought while laughing to himself.

"Fire the crossbows!" Seeing his opponent enter into range, Jia Tianlong licked his dry lips and gave the order without hesitation.

Immediately, hundreds of green steel crossbow bolts fiercely shot toward Han Li. They formed a large mass in front of Han Li, preventing even the wind and rain from passing through.

An astonishing scene occurred. When Jia Tianlong saw the Han Li across from him face the oncoming crossbow bolts, the youth did not have the slightest amount of fear. Instead, he gave Jia Tianlong a strange smile before his body began to blur. Those approaching crossbow bolts

passed through Han Li's figure without the slightest obstruction and flew off into the distance. In that split second, it was as if his body was incorporeal. Soon after, underneath the full light of day, his body shook several times and disappeared without a trace.

Jia Tianlong's complexion ashened. Just as he instructed his subordinates to be careful, Han Li had suddenly appeared only a few dozen steps away from them.

Without waiting for Jia Tianlong to give the order, the Iron Guards disorderly shot out arrows from their crossbows once more. This time, the bolts were followed by flying knives, sleeve-sprung bolts, and a number of other hidden weapons. Combined, they were like a swarm of bees shooting towards Han Li. The attack made these people look at each other in dismay. Their opponent was no longer in their sight, having disappeared without a trace.

Just as Jia Tianlong became alarmed, he suddenly heard two miserable shrieks from behind him. He was taken aback and immediately turned around.

He saw two Iron Guards near him turn into human fireballs. He also saw that the youth who had earlier disappeared now had his palms pressed against the guards' bodies. In the instant his palm left their bodies, the two Iron Guards had already turned to ash. As the youth's palms parted, Jia Tianlong faintly saw a flickering red light from the center of his hand, but he didn't know what astonishing technique Han Li had used.

What Jia Tianlong saw was a demonstration of magic techniques and martial arts being perfectly used simultaneously. A red light glowed from both of his hands; each glowing light was a small fireball from the Fireball Technique.

Han Li slowly circulated magic power through his body, returning the small fireballs to their original size. Then, his figure disappeared once more and immediately reappeared at other end of the crowd. Once again, another Feral Wolf Gang member was turned into a raging fireball.

In this manner, Han Li intermittently disappeared and reappeared within the crowd. Each time he appeared, there was a victim. Regardless of where he touched the victim with his hand, that person would immediately combust and thoroughly disappear from the world.

Jia Tianlong blankly looked ahead with eyes that lacked even the slightest spirit. His complexion turned ash-gray, like that of a corpse.

In that short moment, more than half had died under Han Li's hand. Those remaining felt insecure, and one after another, they began to flee in every direction. However, in the face of the opponent's ghost-like body technique, these people were reduced to ash, one after another.

By the time he was down to his last subordinate, Jia Tianlong's fiery spirit was already smothered. The Commander of the Feral Wolf Gang had become completely numb.

He knew that the fact that he was not touched by Han Li up until now was a meaningless facade, deliberately upheld by his opponent. However, he was the only one remaining now, so he reckoned that the deadly fire would eventually descend onto his own head soon.

Han Li did not let Commander Jia Tianlong wait any longer. After he got rid of the Commander's last subordinate, Han Li did not hesitate and immediately flashed behind Jia Tianlong. Han Li gave Jia Tianlong preferential treatment by sending him off with a complete fireball.

After the great Jia Tianlong was delivered to the next world, Han Li clapped his hands and softly said to himself, "It seems that killing this many people is not too difficult of a matter. I told you earlier to settle it yourselves. That would have been much better! There would have been less suffering as well, but you made me settle this personally. The feeling of being on fire must have certainly been unpleasant!"

(TL: "delivered to the next world": 归西 in Chinese literally means "return west"; this is a euphemism for dying, but it implies that a person has returned to the Western Paradise, a reference to Buddhism.)

Chapter 95: Demonic Name Resounding Famously

Han Li raised his head and stared at the arena. Regardless of whether they were members of the Seven Mysteries Sect or the Feral Wolf Gang, all of them had no hint of color on their faces as they stared at each other with expressions of dread and fear.

Whether it was retrieving the “flying sword”, killing the Saint of Golden Light, or instantly turning Jia Tianlong’s ten bodyguards into ashes, all of these actions indicated that not only was Han Li an Immortal cultivator like the Saint of Golden Light, but he also lacked kindness or mercy. His methods were even more cold-blooded and ruthless than that of the Saint of Golden Light.

Thus, wherever his gaze landed, the people in the direction of his glare would lower their heads and hide. Nobody dared to meet his gaze. The current Han Li was capable of invoking fear into everyone.

“Still not getting lost? Could it be that you want to stay on the mountain and have me send you off?” Han Li coldly said in the direction of the Feral Wolf Gang members.

The sound of his voice could not be considered loud, but the thousands of people currently at the mountain summit could hear him clearly, causing them to be terrified by his voice.

“Quick, let’s escape! If we linger here, he will burn us to death!” An unknown person shouted.

Simultaneously, the Feral Wolf Gang and the rest of the invaders from the smaller sects instantly became chaotic as they pushed one another, trying to be the first to run off the mountains. The stream of people rushing down caused the small mountain path to be extremely crowded. Along the way, many of them were grievously injured and even trampled to death.

Shortly after, the Setting Sun Summit was emptied, other than the

members from the Seven Mysteries Sect, there was no one else.

Wang Juechu was astonished and elated. Never would he have thought that the danger his sect faced would be so easily averted or that Jia Tianlong would be destroyed so forcefully. However, there were also traces of uneasiness in his heart despite his happiness.

He knew that since Han Li could easily avert their disaster, he could also pressure the Seven Mysteries Sect with ease or even destroy it, causing them to become the current Feral Wolf Gang.

As Sect Leader Wang thought of this, traces of worry once again appeared in his initially relaxed heart. Involuntarily, his gaze shifted to the center of the arena.

“Ai! Where’s Doctor Han?” The shocked Sect Leader Wang drew in a sharp breath.

Earlier, that indeterminable expert, Han Li, had disappeared without a trace.

“Did anyone see Doctor Han?” Wang Juechu hurriedly asked.

“No idea!”

“Didn’t notice.”

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Almost everyone in the crowd had no idea where Han Li went, but this was only to be expected. After all, their attention had been fixed on the method that Han Li used to burn his opponents. Who would dare to turn their gaze from that inhumane monster? Because of his ghostly body movements, if Han Li didn’t want them to track his movements, it would be extremely simple to achieve.

“There’s no need to look for him anymore. I saw that he had mixed himself with the crowd and has already departed from Setting Sun Summit.” Many gray-robed men opened their mouths and asserted this once their countenance recovered.

“Already left? Where was he going?” Sect Leader Wang had a

complicated look on his face. He bitterly smiled, murmuring to himself.

As he contemplated his surroundings, his gaze landed on to the a certain corpse.

Wang Juechu's eyes suddenly shined with a bright light as his lips curled into a smile, revealing the look of a crafty old cheater.

At this moment, an incomparably excited Li Feiyu talking to Zhang Xiuer. Because his good friend suddenly exposed himself as a powerful expert, Li Feiyu didn't notice that he became the focus of someone's attention.

Just like this, the Feral Wolf Gang and the rest of the invaders retreated rapidly out of the Celestial Rainbow Mountains. They abused their horses, rushing through the night, in order to quickly leave the Seven Mysteries Sect's territory. Because the power of the Seven Mysteries Sect's upper echelon had been severely damaged, Sect Leader Wang did not send men to pursue the retreating invaders.

That day was an extremely long day. Once the day had passed, both the Feral Wolf Gang and the Seven Mysteries Sect laid down their flags and ceased their drum beats, entering a ceasefire to recuperate from their losses.

This time around, the battle between both parties was a fight with many twists and turns. Before long, word spread of a legendary Immortal, as well as a demonic figure. This legendary tale caused members of both good and evil sects to discuss this topic relentlessly, transforming the story into one that would echo endlessly through multiple generations.

In the story, the great battle began with a supreme sword wielder, capable of unleashing sword beams from his sword, fighting against a Sword Immortal that could fly by stepping on his flying sword. In the end, the Sword Immortal's flying sword techniques were too mysterious, even mightier than the sword beams, and thus the Sword Immortal easily defeated the supreme sword user. Making use of this opportunity, a fiery demon suddenly appeared and killed the Sword Immortal right after the supreme sword user and the Sword Immortal had injured each other. The

demon also went berserk, invoking his flames to kill over 1,000 spectators. One of the casualties was the unlucky Jia Tianlong, Commander of the Feral Wolf Gang. He died without a corpse, disintegrating into dust.

At the border of God Hand Valley, Han Li heard the story in which he became a fiery demon from Li Feiyu's mouth. He stood his ground in shock, speechless. Meanwhile, Li Feiyu was cracking up and bending over in laughter to such an extent that he couldn't even straighten his back after half a day,

It was noontime, the fifth day after the deathmatch.

That night, Han Li silently hid himself within the crowd and left Setting Sun Summit. Once he found Crooked Soul, they returned back to God Hand Valley.

Once he was back, he hung a sign that stated that he would refuse to meet with anyone, even the Seven Mysteries Sect's highest authority, because of seclusion training.

Naturally, because of the fame behind Han Li's name, the top-level figures did not dare to show any sense of dissatisfaction, nor did they dare to intrude God Hand Valley without an invitation. They could only wait obediently outside the valley for a period of time and sigh as they returned back the way they came.

During the following days, Han Li began using the dwarf's sword talisman to practice the Telekinesis Technique.

Because he knew that he didn't have much time left, he would practice his Telekinesis Technique even before the sun rose. Every day, he made the glowing talismans soar through the valley and fly unhindered in a dance until his energy was depleted. Afterward, he would close his eyes to replenish his energy before resuming his practice.

In this manner, Han Li repeatedly persisted his dry and dull training that lasted for three days until he had fully mastered the initial stage of the Telekinesis Technique.

Chapter 96: Flaw

While practicing his control over the talisman's flight, Han Li discovered that using the "Telekinesis Technique" to propel the talisman would turn it into a gray streak of light. Although it was incomparably sharp, there were some major limitations when it was put into full use even though it could cut through nearly everything and attacked according to his will.

First of all, propelling this gray light cost too much magic power!

Once Han Li cultivated to the eighth stage of Eternal Spring Arts, he could continuously use Fireball Technique one hundred times. However, when controlling the gray light, his magic power could only persist for a short quarter of an hour before it was completely exhausted.

He currently remembered that earlier, the Saint of Golden Light had not immediately made use of the gray streak. His magic power was far too limited and could only control the talisman for a pitiful amount of time.

This explained why he had put up such weak resistance when Han Li seized the gray streak. While the the dwarf was controlling the gray streak, the dwarf had probably expended more than half of his magic power. In addition, Han Li's magic power was originally far greater than that of the dwarf's. When contesting in magic power with the dwarf, it was natural for the dwarf to be completely and utterly defeated.

In addition, another problem with the gray streak was that its attacking distance was quite limited. The gray streak could only be easily controlled within a radius of 20 zhang (3.3 meters). Outside of this range, his control would become rigid and sluggish. Occasionally, he would lose control. When flying outside the range of 30 zhang, the grey streak would completely change back to its true form as a talisman and drop to the ground.

With regards to those two flaws, Han Li believed that once his magic power advanced, those problems would gradually be alleviated. However, there was one last problem: the talisman's fatal flaw.

After using the talisman several times, Han Li became aware that the cold light emitted from drawing of the small gray sword slowly grew weaker the more he used it. It seemed that its lifespan was gradually reduced. In other words, this talisman had a limited number of uses. When the number of times it could be used passed the limit, it would be completely exhausted and die a ripe death.

Once Han Li had somewhat learned to control this gray light, he immediately stopped practicing. After all, he wanted to be able to use this talisman during a crucial moment of dangerous situations. Perhaps in a later crisis, this item would be able to save his tiny life.

In the same way, Han Li believed that the golden talisman that could transform into a golden barrier also had a similar restriction. However, for the time being, he didn't know the incantation to use it. He could only store it away and prepare it for future use.

After Han Li had rested, he investigated the triangular command medallion and the Qin Clan's manual. Unfortunately, he gained nothing from these objects.

Five days passed in this manner. The moment when Han Li removed the sign saying that he would not see others, Li Feiyu rushed in like a fart. When he saw Han Li, he told him about the rumor of him turning into a demon.

These rumors left Han Li speechless, not knowing whether to laugh or to cry. He could only harden his face and give Li Feiyu an unhappy look. Li Feiyu was obviously making fun of him.

Li Feiyu finally stopped laughing heartily and slowly restrained his smile. He said to Han Li with a solemn voice, "You should be able to guess the reason why I came here."

"En! Is it not because the sect's many elders did not feel at ease with me and sent you to scout out my attitude?" Han Li dully replied with indifference.

"Hehe! As long as you know." As if he were burdened by the elders' great trust, Li Feiyu let out a sigh.

“However, what do you plan to have me, your close friend, report back to those fellows? In order to bribe me, they have already promised to promote me from my position as the External Blade Division’s Division Head.” Li Feiyu immediately smiled mischievously once more.

Han Li wrinkled his brows. After thinking about it, he gently said, “It seems that the great Sect Leader Wang and those previously mentioned elders are uneasy. Let’s clear up this matter; otherwise, they won’t be able to feel relieved.”

“Then it will be like this! Return and tell Sect Leader Wang that at noon tomorrow I will personally go to Setting Sun Summit to see him. Let him know that he does not need to be uneasy.” Han Li said with a smile.

“Good! With these words, I can report back.” Li Feiyu shrugged his shoulders with a noncommittal answer.

After that, Han Li and Li Feiyu wildly chatted for a moment. It had even gone as far as Han Li showing Li Feiyu the Fireball Technique at close range, greatly opening Li Feiyu’s perspective and leaving him envious for the rest of the day.

This continued for a short while more before Li Feiyu took his leave and left the valley to report back to Wang Juechu.

Han Li stood at the room’s doorway and gazed at Li Feiyu’s departing figure from a distance, lost in thought for a long time. He suddenly smiled mysteriously and entered the room, closing the door behind him.

The next morning, as the sky grew brighter, Han Li climbed Setting Sun Summit with the utmost secrecy. He continued stealthily until he had entered Sect Leader Wang’s room.

When Wang Juechu woke up, he saw the silhouette of a person standing upright next to his bed. His complexion became unsightly, but he managed to squeeze out a stiff smile. Somewhat unnaturally, he asked, “Doctor Han Li, why did you come? I hope you’ll forgive me for not welcoming you! But didn’t we agree to meet at noon? Why has your venerable self come so early?”

Han Li coldly glanced at Sect Leader Wang. This glance made all the hairs on Wang Juechu's body stand on end. Sect Leader Wang's face was as if had he suffered the pain from being cut with a knife.

Seeing Wang Juechu look frightened, Han Li could not help but be secretly pleased with himself. He looked at Wang Juechu after executing the Heaven's Eye Technique, giving himself some particular effects. A few days ago, his research discovered a new use for the Heaven's Eye Technique: he could use the Heaven's Eye to cause the spirits of ordinary mortals to be in awe.

"There is no reason. I simply felt that if I were to come earlier, everyone's minds might be a bit more clear-headed. That way, they wouldn't force any unpleasant affairs upon the other party." The slightest expression could not be discerned from Han Li's face, although his tone seemed somewhat ill-intentioned.

Chapter 97: Backhand Transaction

As soon as Sect Leader Wang heard this, his heart could not help but thump like a drum.

Yesterday, he and the other Elders had received Han Li's message from Li Feiyu that he would come to Setting Sun Summit tomorrow at noon. Some of these people had immediately felt that Han Li was far too dangerous and lost their reason, proposing during the meeting to take action and seize the opportunity to kill Han Li.

However, this proposition suffered great opposition from a different group. They recognized that such actions were far too dangerous and that they were likely to suffer great retribution if they failed.

Those wanting to take action immediately divulged rumors for quite a while and dreamed up many justifications during the night for the purpose of intense refutation.

Actually, all of these people were well aware that the accusation that Han Li was far too dangerous was all but just a pretense. There were some people that were envious of his cultivation technique and had planned to conspire against him in order to reap gains from Doctor Han Li. Perhaps even those who opposed the accusations possessed similar intentions. It was just that they would use milder and more covert methods compared to the people who outright conspired against Han Li.

In Sect Leader Wang's presence, both of these groups quarreled with anger and excitement. From the beginning of each meeting to its quick dispersion, no side had truly convinced the other. Instead, they continued to argue garrulously.

Finally, when the surviving martial uncle, the gray-clothed man, saw that the conflict showed no signs of settling down, he coldly said a few words to immediately calm everyone down.

"Could it be you aren't afraid of his elders coming to find him after he's killed?" The gray-clothed man's words were like a bucket of cold water, immediately sobering the Elders' feverish minds.

“That’s right! Han Li is so young, but he’s already this ferocious. He must definitely have an Immortal class elder behind him. Even if we cover up the nature of his death, when his elders come, wouldn’t everyone here die a tragic death?”

When they understood that killing Doctor Han would be equivalent to killing themselves, those who originally advocated an attempt to poison Han Li had completely changed their minds. However, one or two of them were still blinded by greed and persisted, though they now suggested more moderate methods to deal with Han Li instead.

Sect Leader Wang had just heard Han Li speak some profound words. He felt somewhat guilty, and believed that Han Li possessed great magic power. Because Wang Juechu did not know how Han Li had learned the details of the dispute that occurred the day before, he grew even more cautious.

However, Wang Juechu had been a Sect Leader for many years, so his experience and shrewdness were extraordinary. He quickly broke away from the effect of the Heaven Eye’s Technique and regained his normal expression.

“Medicinal God Han Li, why do you say these words? This entire sect couldn’t possibly thank your venerable self enough.” After Wang Juechu had examined the situation, he decided to explore the meaning behind Han Li’s words.

“Then why did I hear that there were people who wanted to harm me?” Han Li stated in a dull tone while laughing grimly.

As Sect Leader Wang heard this, he was initially frightened, but after looking for signs of anger from Han Li, he soon calmed down slightly. Since Han Li did not speak with an angry tone and had come to see him by himself, he may have simply heard a few rumors without knowing specific details. It seemed that Wang Juechu still had some leeway to repair the relationship between Han Li and the Seven Mysteries Sect.

“Medicinal God Han Li might have misunderstood. Yesterday, a few degenerates had indeed appeared in the sect in an attempt to forget favors

and violate justice. However, please be relieved. These people have long been captured and are under strict observation. The great majority of the sect are nevertheless grateful towards you, Doctor Han. We absolutely wouldn't take actions that would harm our friends and benefit our enemies." After pondering for a moment, Wang Juechu spoke those words with an awe-inspiring righteousness.

Hearing this, Han Li grimly laughed in his heart. Ever since he had revealed his strength and assisted the Seven Mysteries Sect through this calamity, he had reminded himself to be careful of the proverbs "the birds are gone, the bow is put away" and to "destroy the bridge after crossing the river". He did not believe that the others would have kindness and be thankful towards him, but the hearts of men were truly hard to fathom. He resigned himself to the words that the great men have once said: So long as there were benefits, forgetting favors to violate justice and not recognizing one's family were no less common than drinking water.

This was also one of the reasons why he had refused to meet with the conspirators after Han Li had returned to the valley. He had deliberately made these Elders cool their heads; otherwise, the torch of greed would completely burn away their reason.

Although he had told Li Feiyu to deliver a message that he would meet with the Elders, Han Li did not plan to meet them on schedule.

Even though his current strength was far greater than that of an ordinary expert from Jiang Hu, if the Elders were to use a few shameful methods, there would be far too many methods capable of killing him.

As a result, he intentionally arrived half a day earlier for the sake of his safety, stealthily meeting with Sect Leader Wang by himself.

Just now, he had merely probed Wang Juechu a little. This great Sect Leader Wang had revealed all that he originally wished to conceal. It seemed that these Seven Mystery Sect Elders had truly thought over such matters and wanted to act against him.

However, this did not matter! Regardless of whether the other party truly wanted to act against him or were just contemplating about it, they

would not elicit any anger from him. By the time he finished his business with the number one figure in the Seven Mysteries Sect, he would have already gone far away. Thus, he would no longer have any relations with them.

After looking at Wang Juechu for a moment, he mysteriously said, “I won’t speak any more nonsense! I won’t hide this from you, Sect Leader Wang. After this meeting between your venerable self and I, I will depart from this place and travel to a faraway land. It is very likely that I will not return to the Celestial Rainbow Mountains. Before I leave, I wish to make a deal with Sect Leader that would be beneficial to both parties.”

“A deal?” Hearing that Han Li would leave, Sect Leader Wang was stunned. However, after hearing that he wanted to make a deal with him, he was even more bewildered.

“What kind of deal can I do for Medicinal God Han?” He could not help but be somewhat perturbed.

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When noon arrived, Han Li did not appear at Setting Sun Summit’s sect hall at the time he had originally set. Instead, Sect Leader Wang arrived to the meeting place last, trembling with excitement.

The great Sect Leader Wang proclaimed on the spot that they did not need to wait for Han Li because Han Li had already left the Celestial Rainbow Mountains. He did not know where he went, but he guessed that Han Li had departed the Jing Province and even Yue State. As a result, all their troubles had already faded away.

When those who were present heard these words, they all widely opened their eyes and looked at each other in shock. The entire meeting room was absolutely silent. “He isn’t here anymore? Then haven’t our plans turned to bullshit? Why, why did he leave?!” These people had helpless thoughts circulating in their heads.

(TLN: 鸟尽弓藏 – “the birds are over, the bow is put away”: to get rid of someone once he has served his purpose.

过河拆桥- “to destroy the bridge after crossing the river”: to abandon one’s benefactor upon achieving one’s goal.

忘恩负义- “to forget favors and violate justice”: to kick a benefactor in the teeth.

六亲不认- “not recognizing one’s family”: to be self-centered and not make any allowances for the needs of a relative.)

Chapter 98: Return to the Village

Not long after Han Li had left the Celestial Rainbow Mountains, Sect Leader Wang announced that he had decided to accept Li Feiyu as his successor and had promoted him from Division Head Deputy to Division Head of the External Blade Division. From then on, Wang Juechu had placed an immense amount of care and trust on him. Furthermore, Han Li's third uncle would make a careless blunder and break the sect rules in the future several years from now. When he should have been worrying for his life, Sect Leader Wang had intervened and defended him.

And as for Sect Leader Wang himself, he became grievously injured after facing several formidable enemies in one of the sect's future conflicts and drawn to the verge of death. But every time the sect members thought that he would finally succumb to his injuries, Sect Leader Wang would consume a medicinal pill from a jade bottle and somehow miraculously survive. Not only that, but he could also still prance about, full of vitality. This caused others to feel somewhat jealous, and they probed him for details about the origins of the medicine. But of course, Wang Juechu would never divulge the secret; instead, murmuring inconsequential words whenever they asked him. Thus, all those who wanted to know his secret returned empty-handed.

After Wang Juechu passed away, he left behind a medicinal pill named "Vitality Raising Pellet." By this time, there were only three pills left inside the jade bottle. These three pills caused a storm of blood and brought endless troubles for Wang Juechu's descendants. Nevertheless, these were all events that would take place in the future, so there was no point discussing them right now.

As for the current Li Feiyu, he was holding a few bottles in his hand and a paper note. He had just returned back to his residence from Zhang Xiuer's place, and discovered several items that suddenly appeared in his house.

The paper note was left by Han Li, and the information it contained was very simple: Han Li had left the Seven Mysteries Sect and might never

return. The note also mentioned that inside the bottles were medicinal pills that he had painstakingly concocted. They would be able to extend Li Feiyu's lifespan, so Han Li hoped that Li Feiyu wouldn't reject his gift.

On the back of the paper, there was an impression of Han Li's smiling face near his signature. Adjacent to the smiling face was a sentence congratulating Li Feiyu and Zhang Xiuer, hoping that they would marry soon and have many babies together.

After Li Feiyu recovered from his shock, he ran out of his residence and rushed up a small mountain peak that was close to his home.

On the mountain peak, Li Feiyu gazed towards the main gate of the Seven Mysteries Sect, only to see a field of green. He was unable to discover a single silhouette, but he waited motionlessly for half a day before drawing in a huge breath. Trembling as emotion showed on his face, he said in a low voice, "Take care of yourself! I wish you well on your future path!"

Only then did Li Feiyu slowly descend from the mountain peak. Depression emanated from his lonely back.

At this moment, a horse-drawn carriage was trotting on the pathway, heading east.

Han Li and Crooked Soul were sitting inside the carriage. Although this four-wheeled carriage was not that cramped, Han Li had spent three taels of silver and temporarily rented the vehicle so that only the two of them were within the carriage.

This wooden carriage appeared worn and tattered on the surface, but the interior was actually extremely clean and tidy. Not only that, the two horses that were pulling the carriage were at the prime of their life, filled with strength and vitality. With vigorous strength, they pulled the carriage along with such swiftness that it could be comparable to flying.

It was precisely because Han Li had noticed these two details that he was willing to spend three taels of silver to rent the carriage. Normally, only one tael of silver would be sufficient to rent this kind of carriage.

The driver was a skinny tanned middle-aged commoner who refused to partake in conversation. Other than the time Han Li had initiated a conversation and asked for directions, he wouldn't speak any unnecessary words, making Han Li feel satisfied.

Next to Han Li was Crooked Soul, who had an immense stature and a mask to cover its face, making it seem extremely mysterious. If the driver was a gossip, there would surely be many troubles.

The intelligent yellow-feathered Cloud-Winged Bird stood on Han Li's shoulder. Its eyes were half-closed, as if it were resting.

Crooked Soul, who was in the seat facing Han Li, carried a large package. Other than some clean clothes, the package contained gold, silver, and some bottles that were pretty heavy.

As for the rest, such as Doctor Mo's will and certain small miscellaneous items, Han Li carried them on his body, out of fear that he would misplace them.

Han Li sat quietly in the carriage, listening to the sounds the wooden wheels made as they turned, with no fluctuation in his expression. There was no reason for him to be downcast about leaving the Seven Mysteries Sect.

The only thing that he would not bear to leave behind was his intimate friend, Li Feiyu. But with the knowledge that his counterpart had received his note and the pills that he had concocted, Han Li hoped that these would be sufficient enough for Li Feiyu to carry out the second half of his life in peace.

Thinking of this, he stretched this body, rested his back on the cushioned seats, and dozed off. As for his destination, he had already informed the driver earlier: the small village from which he had originated.

Although he knew that it was impossible, he hoped beyond hope that, the moment he opened his eyes, he would be able to see the faces of his family surrounding him.

He had left home for so many years that their faces had long blurred in his memory. Thus, before Han Li truly started on the next leg of his journey, he needed to see his family members one last time. If not, his heart would never be at ease.

“I wonder how my little sister is doing right now. She should already be 16 or 17, a grown woman! According to the letters that I received, it seems that she was betrothed to a good family and is currently preparing to get married.” A weak and small figure appeared in Han Li’s mind just as he was falling asleep. The owner of this figure was always behind him, calling out “Fourth brother, fourth brother!”

“Time truly passes by extremely fast!”

In this warm atmosphere with his own memories, Han Li fell asleep. This time, he slept soundly and was at peace, similar to the times when he was young and his parents were beside him, protecting him from danger.

After five days of travelling along the yellow earthen path, Han Li finally saw a village far off in the distance.

There was the low wall made of mud, the rows of rice paddies, and that bumpy road full of potholes. All this had once captivated Han Li so the extent that he had dreamt about it daily; now, it finally appeared in front of his eyes.

Han Li suppressed the excitement in his heart. He allowed the driver to stop the carriage far outside the village, while Crooked Soul remained in the carriage. Then, Han Li walked towards the direction of the village. The closer he got, the faster his heart thumped.

Han Li had not felt such an irresistible emotion in a long time!

Chapter 99: Departure

Finally, Han Li entered the village, advancing step by step.

As he walked through the village entrance, he heard a burst of joyous sounds from musical instruments. Strangely, not a single person could be seen as he walked through the village's small streets.

Han Li's heart stirred. The empty streets and the joyous sounds were memories from his childhood that he couldn't be more familiar with. This was clearly someone's wedding celebration. Everyone in the village would celebrate and join in on the fun.

Han Li lifted his spirits and slowly spread out his spiritual awareness. By doing so, he discovered that both young and old had gathered together at the village center as he expected. However, the place they had gathered at felt so familiar to Han Li. Was this not the house where he had lived?

Han Li was surprised by no small amount.

"Could it be...?" Han Li had a faint guess at last.

He sped up his pace, hastily passing by many households and turning many corners until he saw the sight before him.

Several hundred villagers were surrounding an earthen courtyard.

Inside the courtyard, there were many tile-roofed houses that were in better condition than the houses nearby. A large banner with celebratory words hung from each entrance. In addition, there was a small group of instrumental performers that was making quite a bit of noise at the front of the courtyard.

There were some villagers who stood, others who crouched, and a few who were not paying attention and simply sitting on the ground. Gathered into groups of three and four, they whispered and sometimes engaged in heated arguments. Some continued to look at the courtyard with envy.

In addition, there were many children joyfully chasing one another under adult supervision.

Seeing this familiar scene, Han Li's mind was distracted for a time. In this split second, it was as if he had returned to his childhood from long ago and was with the other children, chasing them while making lots of noise.

"Zeze! The Han Family's fourth daughter truly has good fortune. I heard the husband is a state official from the city, a truly studious and scholarly individual."

(TL: "zeze"- the sound of a tongue clicking.)

"Truly? And she is going to be his legal wife? She's going to have the status of an official's wife!"

(TL: Legal wife as opposed to being a concubine.)

"I heard that the Han Family had delivered a frighteningly large dowry: several dozen taels of snowflake silver!"

"They are truly wealthy!"

.....

The village women's noisy gossiping roused Han Li from his stupor.

"The Han Family's fourth daughter? Isn't that my little sister?! Could it truly be the day of my little sister's wedding?" Han Li felt a burst of vague emotions continuously surging inside him.

Though what he thought remained a mystery, Han Li hid behind a large nearby tree several steps away, attentively and unwaveringly staring at the courtyard gate.

Suddenly, someone shouted from a distance, "The sedan chair has arrived! The groom has come to receive the bride!"

(TL: "花车" literally means "decorated carriage". Nowadays, it refers to parade floats.)

Upon hearing these words, the villagers were in an uproar, instantly becoming a boiling cauldron of voices!

"The bride has emerged!"

“The bride has emerged! Quickly come and see!”

.....

The clamoring even surpassed that of the shrilling children. Han Li’s spirit shook as he fervently continued to watch the courtyard gate.

Creak. The wooden courtyard gate opened. More than a dozen men and women came out, escorting a young woman wearing a red wedding dress in between them.

This young woman’s chin was sharp, and her appearance was graceful, belonging to a girl 16 or 17 years old. At this moment, her face was bashful.

Han Li widely opened his eyes and attentively observed this young woman’s appearance, trying to find some resemblance with the little sister from his memories.

Aside from her general facial appearance and the corner of her eyes, he found no other trace of familiarity from his olden days. The rest of her appearance could no longer be associated with the little sister from his memories.

“Sigh! A girl changes eight times from childhood to womanhood. These words truly makes sense!” Han Li bitterly smiled and then swept his gaze to the people at her side.

“This fatty is third uncle. I can already tell who he is with a single look. He’s just as fat as before!”

“That large tanned person at the side is Eldest Brother Han Tie. That woman close to his side should be his wife!”

.....

Han Li’s mouth muttered as he called their names out one by one. This somehow made him relax a little.

When his gaze fell upon an old gray-haired couple, Han Li ceased speaking.

Motionless, he blankly stood behind the tree. His expression became

extremely complicated.

Among these emotions included happiness, timidity, and bewilderment.

His parents had aged far greater than Han Li had anticipated. When he had gone up the mountains, he remembered that his mother's hair was jet-black color. However, all of her hair was ash-colored now. In addition, his father's originally straight back was now hunched over.

Han Li remained speechless, while his mind became dizzy like a ball of paste. Because of everything that had occurred, he didn't notice that it was already dawn.

By the time he cleared his head, his little sister had already sat in the red silk sedan chair and was carried off into the distance. Following closely behind was a scholar mounted on a large cyan horse.

Han Li focused his sight to look at the sedan chair that was moving further away. He gazed at his parents in the crowd, and then closed his eyes.

After he had deeply engraved the appearances of his parents and several kin into his heart, he turned around. His face expressed unwavering determination as he walked toward the village's exit with large strides.

Han Li knew that if he were to walk across the village entrance once more, he would come across these people and spend the rest of his life here.

He clearly knew that ever since he had gained insights in the Eternal Spring Arts and learned about the existence of Immortal cultivation, he had walked on a path completely different from that of ordinary mortals.

Regardless of whether there would be misfortune or happiness, prosperity or hardship, he would never regret his choice!

Credits

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